

# THE PRAGMATICS of LITURGICAL DISCOURSE

With Special Reference to English Reformed Worship and the

Performative Language Doxology of Jean Ladrière

By Revd. David Hilborn, BA MA

Thesis submitted to the University of Nottingham  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, October 1994

VOLUME 1

Part I & Part II Chapters 5-6



**BEST COPY**

**AVAILABLE**

Variable print quality

# CONTENTS

## VOLUME 1

Abstract  
Preface  
Note on referencing

### PART I: THE ANATOMY OF LITURGICAL PRAGMATICS: METHOD, THEORY AND FIELDWORK

1	Towards a Pragmatics of Liturgy	1
1.1	Pragmatics and liturgy: grounds for association	1
1.2	Pragmatics and liturgy in the realm of semiotics	4
1.3	An integrated schema for liturgical pragmatics	7
2	Pragmatics, Language and Discourse: Methodological Foundations for a New Liturgic	11
2.1	Definitional issues	11
2.2	Root concepts in linguistic pragmatics: their relation to liturgy	13
2.2.1	<i>Langue</i> and <i>parole</i>	13
2.2.2	Meaning as use: language games and forms of life	15
2.2.3	Competence, performance and communicative competence	17
2.2.4	Further definitive concepts: Sentence v utterance; type v token; sense v force	22
2.2.5	Context	24
2.3	Contemporary linguistic pragmatics: its scope and application to liturgy	28
2.4	Pragmatics, religious language and liturgy: precedents and points for development	43
2.4.1	General theological and philosophical studies of religious language	45
2.4.2	Theological and philosophical applications of pragmatics to religious language	52

2.4.3	General theological studies of liturgical language	60
2.4.4	Theological and philosophical applications of pragmatics to the language of liturgy	68
2.4.5	Religious and liturgical language study in linguistics	77
2.5	Confirming key needs: the refinement, synthesis and extension of liturgical-pragmatic method	85
3	<b>Pragmatics and Doxology: Theories of Language-Use and Theologies of Worship</b>	87
3.1	Doxology and pragmatic theory	87
3.2	Language-use as an issue in contemporary liturgical theology	91
3.3	Jean Ladrière and the 'performativity' of liturgical language	98
3.4	Implications for a <i>Reformed</i> liturgical pragmatics	111
4	<b>Pragmatics and the data of liturgical performance: an empirical approach to the sacral speech-event</b>	132
4.1	The place and use of corpus data in pragmatics	132
4.2	The use of corpora in liturgical language study: precedents and principles	138
4.3	Original data used in this study	147
4.3.1	Printed material: the United Reformed Church <i>Service Book</i> (1989)	150
4.3.2	Field data: Advent Sunday Survey	152
4.3.2.1	Background	152
4.3.2.2	Determining the data field	154
4.3.2.3	Analytical perspective	155
4.3.2.4	Selection of participant congregations	157
4.3.2.5	Selection of services for analysis	166
4.3.2.6	Data collection procedures	168
4.3.2.6.1	Audio recording	170
4.3.2.6.2	Informant testing: questionnaire	172
4.3.2.6.3	Ethnosemantic analysis: service order chart	172
4.3.3	Transcription of field data	175
4.3.3.1	General principles	175
4.3.3.2	The 'turn' as a basic transcription unit: applications to liturgical discourse	177



4.3.3.3	'Significant pausing' as a turn criterion: distinctive patterns in liturgical discourse	182
4.3.3.4	Stress, volume, tone and pitch	193
4.3.3.5	Orthography	195
4.3.3.6	Non-transcribed material: the omission of sermons, hymn texts and readings from analysis	196
4.3.3.7	Incorporating ethnosemantic data into transcripts: the segmentation of service discourse	201
4.3.3.8	Extralinguistic features: the representation of context	203
4.4	From 'anatomy' to 'operation'	205

## **PART II: PRAGMATICS IN LITURGIOLOGICAL PRACTICE: THE FUNCTIONS OF REFORMED SERVICE DISCOURSE**

5	<b>The Word Performed: Liturgy and Speech Act Theory</b>	206
5.1	Background	206
5.2	Liturgy and 'the isolation of the performative'	207
5.3	Felicity conditions and rules of use in church worship	210
5.4	From performative/constative to locution/illocution/perlocution	233
5.4.1	Locutions v illocutions in worship	237
5.4.2	The problem of 'explicit performatives' in liturgy	249
5.4.3	Illocutions and perlocutions in worship	259
5.5	Illocutionary acts, illocutionary forces and 'directions of fit' in liturgy	265
5.6	Key complications in a speech act analysis of liturgy	306
5.6.1	Indirectness	306
5.6.2	Pragmatic ambivalence	309
5.6.2.1	Assertive Directives	311
5.6.2.2	Assertive-Commissive Directives	312
5.6.2.3	Assertive Expressives	312
5.6.2.4	Assertive-Expressive Commissives	314
5.6.2.5	Assertive Declarations	315
5.6.2.6	Assertive-Expressive Declarational Directives	316
5.6.3	'Felicity' and 'truth' in sacral discourse	318

6	<b>The Word Communicated: Liturgy, Implicature and Relevance</b>	334
6.1	From speech acts to interaction	334
6.2	Implicature and liturgy	336
6.3	Liturgy in the light of relevance theory	372

## VOLUME 2

7	<b>The Word Elaborated: Liturgy as Discourse and Dialogue</b>	401
7.1	Beyond the single speech act: liturgical pragmatics as necessarily discursal and dialogical	401
7.2	'Macro speech act' models and the study of liturgy	408
7.2.1	Consequent liturgical speech acts: illocutions or perlocutions?	417
7.2.2	Liturgy as 'conversation?': some basic distinctions	427
7.3	Developing a model for extended liturgical speech action: from bi-lateral exchanges to multilateral, contextualised speech-events	431
7.4	Monological v dialogical paradigms in Reformed worship: the diachronic perspective	453
7.4.1	The reinforcement of Calvinistic monologism in English Puritan worship	456
7.4.2	Monologues v dialogues from 1662 to the present	466
7.5	Similarities and differences in the pragmatic functions of monological and dialogical worship discourse	476
7.5.1	The analogy with drama	478
7.5.2	Liturgical discourse which might equally be monological or dialogical	482
7.5.3	Liturgical discourse which is distinctively monological or dialogical	486
7.5.3.1	Agreement and the dialogical status of 'Amen'	492
7.5.3.2	Further intrinsically dialogical sequences in liturgy	496
7.5.3.2.1	Question-answer	497
7.5.3.2.2	Greeting-greeting	505

7.5.3.2.3	Offer-acceptance	509
7.5.4	The characteristic indirectness and ambivalence of liturgical adjacency pairs	514
7.5.5	Radical asyndeton and frequent topic-shifting as generic indicators of liturgy	516
7.6	The pragmatic drawbacks of Reformed 'didactic monologism'	523

<b>8</b>	<b>The Word Ritualized: Liturgy as Activity Type</b>	<b>525</b>
8.1	Preliminary remarks	525
8.2	Sociolinguistic paradigms for liturgical pragmatics: activity types, pre patterning and the ethnography of speaking	526
8.2.1.	Degrees of liturgical pre patterning: a hypothesis	528
8.2.1.1	Routine, convention and ritual in liturgy	532
8.3	Situational pre patterning of the church service	541
8.3.1	Sacral settings	541
8.3.2	Sacral scenes	546
8.4	Participational pre patterning: speech and utterance event roles in liturgy	550
8.5	Teleological pre patterning: the purposed ends of liturgy	564
8.6	Act-sequential pre patterning in worship	567
8.6.1	The fixity of message form and message content in liturgy	567
8.6.2	Forms of speech: liturgical codes and registers	584
8.7	Pre patterned norms of sacral interaction and interpretation	588
8.8	Generic pre patterning in the church service	592

\*\*\*

<b>9</b>	<b>Conclusions</b>	<b>606</b>
9.1	Overall conceptions	606
9.2	Methodological points	608
9.3	Theoretical points	617
9.4	Empirical points	621
9.5	The way ahead: Liturgical pragmatics	623
9.6	The way ahead: United Reformed Church worship	625

## **Appendices: Advent Sunday Survey Data**

1.	Churches participating in Advent Sunday Survey	628
2.	Questionnaire format	629
3.	Transcription Conventions	637
4.	Field data: summarised questionnaire information, transcripts and service order charts	639
4.1	Herne Hill United Reformed/Methodist Church, London	640
4.2	Emmanuel United Reformed Church, West Wickham, Kent	656
4.3	Thatcham United Reformed Church, Berkshire	680
4.4	Derriford United Reformed Church, Devon	697
4.5	Warsash United Reformed Church, Hampshire	727
4.6	Wheatley United Reformed Church, Oxfordshire	746
4.7	Weoley Castle Community Church (United Reformed), Birmingham	768
4.8	Bulwell United Reformed Church, Nottingham	794
4.9	Blackford Bridge United Reformed Church, Bury (Greater Manchester)	814
4.10	St. George's United Reformed Church, High Heaton, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne	833
5.	Audio recordings	(On tape)

<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>856</b>
---------------------	------------

## ABSTRACT

This study subjects Christian liturgy to linguistic-pragmatic analysis. It does so first, by 'anatomising' a new discipline of 'liturgical pragmatics' and second, by putting this anatomy into operation. In each case, it proceeds in accordance with David Crystal's three-fold schema for religious language research: as such, it co-ordinates methodological, theoretical and empirical interpretations in a survey which claims to be more systematic and contemporary than previous work on the pragmatics of sacral discourse. Specifically, it concentrates on the worship of the English Reformed church - a domain which has thus far been overlooked in studies of liturgical language-use, but one whose distinctive bias towards extemporary prayer invites the approach proposed.

Methodologically, liturgic exegesis is shown to benefit from engagement with the interpretative strategies of speech act theory, implicature, relevance theory, extensional pragmatics, conversational pragmatics and socio-pragmatics.

Theoretically, Jean Ladrière's model of liturgical language performativity is seen to provide a valuable basis for rapprochement between pragmatic principles and Christian doxology; nevertheless, it is argued that an even closer association can be made between pragmatic theory and Reformed liturgical doctrine.

Empirically, models and hypotheses are tested against a corpus of data drawn from liturgical performance in the United Reformed Church. This comprises tapes, transcripts and participant-accounts of ten services conducted in different URC

congregations on Advent Sunday, 1991.

Close pragmatic study of this corpus, and of its Calvinist precedents, confirms that English Reformed worship has allowed an over-informative 'didactic monologism' to eclipse more directly participative and potentially 'eventful' historic forms. Although these forms have been extensively revived in the 1989 URC *Service Book*, it is proposed that they are more likely to return to regular URC services as creatively-adapted and suitably modernised discourse units.

## PREFACE

Dean Inge once likened liturgical study to stamp collecting, and confessed that he could see little point in either. I take a more positive view, but there is no doubt that liturgists have traditionally been preoccupied with the work of textual archaeology and historical reconstruction, and that this has often excluded a more broadly semiotic approach to sacral performance. In more recent times, however, there has been a growth of interest in the communicative dynamics of liturgy in general and liturgical language in particular - not only as a 'philological' concern, but also as an issue to be dealt with through modern, 'post-Saussurean' analysis. What follows is an attempt to develop this second line of thought in a way which seems to me to be especially appropriate. That I have been able to undertake such a project is down to the skill, generosity and support of several people.

During my time as an undergraduate in the Modern English Language Department at Nottingham University, Prof. Walter Nash, Prof. Ron Carter and Miss Margaret Berry all helped ignite a passion for linguistics which has grown to this day. In particular, Dr. Paul Simpson deserves thanks for having introduced me with such enthusiasm to the field of pragmatics. When I moved on to read theology and train for the Ministry at Mansfield College, Oxford, Dr. George Carras encouraged me to apply my text-critical education to sacred discourses, while Dr.

Martin Davie and Revd. John Bremner taught me to think theologically. At the same time, Revd. Charles Brock convinced me that liturgiology was not only important, but that it also promises an attractive compound of theological disciplines.

Very special thanks are due to my research Supervisors. Revd. Prof. John Heywood Thomas smoothed my return to Nottingham by showing faith in my proposal and accepting me as his student. His wise advice guided me through the early stages of my work and helped me to sharpen my focus. Dr. Vimala Herman affirmed my wish to operate in a truly interdisciplinary fashion, and from the outset has brought her expert knowledge of applied pragmatics and religious language to bear on my linguistic analyses. I am particularly indebted to her for convincing me that a field corpus would enhance my investigation, and for raising my confidence at moments of self-doubt. When Prof. Heywood Thomas retired, I could not have wished for a better person to take me on than Revd. Prof. Anthony Thiselton. I have benefited not only from his astonishingly vast knowledge of relevant sources, but also from his commitment to interdepartmental study and from his personal kindness.

I should like to express my gratitude to Revd. Tony Coates, who checked my typescript prior to submission.

The funding for this project has come from Dr. Williams's Trust, the University of Nottingham Revis Fund, the Coward Trust, the Ministries Department of the United Reformed Church and the Diocese of Southwell. I thank



each of these bodies for their generous assistance.

I could not have progressed in the first three part-time years of my work without the co-operation of Keyworth United Reformed Church, who graciously agreed to share their young novice Minister with his books and papers. Nor could I have completed this thesis if the City Temple, London, had not consented to defer my induction for one year until September 1994. I am indebted to the elders and members there for their patience.

Finally, I can scarce begin here to do justice to the love, companionship and longsuffering of my dear wife, Mia. For the duration of this project, she has borne the main burden of financial responsibility in our marriage, exercised two demanding pastoral ministries, given birth to our son Matthew, and granted me the utmost spiritual and emotional backing. To everyone mentioned, I express my sincere gratitude; to Mia, I am grateful beyond words.

London, August 1994

## NOTE ON REFERENCING

Referencing in this study is according to the Harvard (author-date-page) system. This system is now commonplace in linguistics and is beginning to become popular in theology. It allows notes to be reserved only for necessary elaboration of the main text. It does mean, however, that the main text becomes longer than in the 'classical' system, which includes references to other works alongside more substantive footnotes or endnotes. In our case, this increased length is compounded by the large number of illustrations and practical examples cited from our fieldwork corpus of church service discourse. Nevertheless, once these bracketed author-date references and illustrative examples are discounted, the main text meets the word-limit standards of a normal Ph.D..

The key abbreviations used are as follows:

- |      |   |
|------|---|
| AS   | Advent Sunday Survey. Refers to church or service transcript in fieldwork corpus. Usually followed by one or two figures: the first refers to the a particular church in the survey, as numbered in Appendix 1 (eg. AS.6 refers to Wheatley United Reformed Church); the second refers to the relevant line(s) in the transcript of that church's service (eg. AS 4.107 refers to line 107 in the transcript of the service at Derriford United Reformed Church). |
| CELC | Church of England Liturgical Commission (authors of the 1980 <i>Alternative Service Book</i> )  |
| URC  | The United Reformed Church in the United Kingdom  |

It should also be noted that for accuracy, references to Jean Ladrière's core article 'The performativity of liturgical language' also include line-references after page references (eg. Ladrière 1973: 59, l.325).

In citations from older works, spelling has been modernised for consistency.

For the transcription conventions used in our corpus see Appendix 3.

# PART I

## THE ANATOMY OF LITURGICAL PRAGMATICS:

## METHOD, THEORY AND FIELDWORK

## CHAPTER 1

### TOWARDS A PRAGMATICS OF LITURGY

#### 1.1 Pragmatics and liturgy: grounds for association

Pragmatics may be defined as the study of language *use*. More specifically, it is concerned with how language functions in relation to context, and with how it operates as an instrument of human interaction<sup>1</sup>. This study aims to show that as such, pragmatics can provide valuable insights into the dynamics of liturgy, since it is in its liturgical context that religious language is most definitively 'put to work'.

At a basic level, it is not difficult to see that liturgy might lend itself very readily to pragmatic analysis. It is, after all, a fundamental type of social communication - one which operates quintessentially in relation to specific actions, specific interpreters and specific contexts (Schmidt 1971: 10-11). In J.D. Crichton's terms (1978: 5), while liturgical events may be profoundly sacred, they are also 'profoundly human'. From the earliest civilisations onwards, cultural identities have both shaped, and been shaped by, 'rites of passage', and these seem to have proved

---

1. For similar basic definitions see Stanlaker 1972:380; Haberland & Mey 1977:1; Crystal 1991: 271; McArthur 1992:800; Richards, Platt & Platt 1992:284. Within such essential relations of language to use, context and communication there are, as we shall see, numerous variations.

necessary even where there has been little conscious motivation from religion (van Gennep 1960; Eliade 1965; Grainger 1988: 10-22).

Although it is a key axiom of pragmatics that the 'meaning' of words is determined by their contingent function rather than by their etymology (Crystal 1971: 63; cf. Barr 1961: 107-60), the very term 'liturgy' itself bears at least a trace of pragmatic significance. Most liturgists at some point stress its roots in a Greek compound (λειτουργία) derived from words for 'labour' (ἔργον) and 'people' (λαός) (Power 1984: 148; Fageberg 1992: 181ff.). Though the term related originally to some service performed by an individual for the public at large, and though it is likely thus to have meant 'work *on behalf of* the people' rather than 'work *of* the people' (Wolterstorff 1992: 274), the resonance of its link between 'activity' and 'community' has hardly been lost on liturgical scholarship. In his seminal work *The Shape of the Liturgy* Dom Gregory Dix called memorably for a re-emphasis on worship as 'primarily something done' rather than something just 'said', arguing that while eucharistic celebration since the Latin Middle Ages had been cast as 'saying Mass' and 'hearing Mass', 'the ancients on the contrary habitually spoke of "*doing* the eucharist" (*eucharistiam facere*), "*performing* the mysteries" (*mysteria telem*) and "*making* the synaxis" (*synaxin agein, collectam facere*)' (Dix 1945: 12-13). As we shall see, such ancient conceptions have strongly 'proto-pragmatic' overtones. Then again, Roger Grainger anticipates our task even more explicitly when he suggests that religious rituals mediate 'a special kind of language' - one which conveys 'a real meeting of persons in which emotions,

attitudes, the experience of life itself can all be shared' (1974: xi). The *particularity* of sacral language use will recur as an issue throughout this study, but even insofar as it is focussed on 'users and contexts', pragmatics can be seen to be very compatibly focussed on how language functions in relation to 'meetings of persons', to their 'emotions, thoughts, attitudes' and 'experience'. By the same token, Grainger's depiction of liturgy as 'shared interaction' invites a thoroughgoing pragmatic exposition.

Though such an exposition could no doubt apply to worship in a vast range of religious traditions (cf. Ware 1993), we shall be concerned here with Christianity - firstly because it is with this that we are most familiar and secondly, because we believe that the placing of liturgical language in a pragmatics perspective can offer important insights to Christian theology as well as to linguistics *per se*. Most especially, we shall concentrate on that branch of Christianity known as the Reformed tradition. As developed from the mid-Sixteenth century worship of John Calvin's Geneva, Reformed liturgy has been reasonably well studied from historical and doctrinal viewpoints (Davies 1948; von Allmen 1965; Barkley 1966; Nichols 1968; Old 1984; Spinks 1984a, 1984b). Nevertheless, we shall see that even as the general study of liturgical *language* remains severely underdeveloped, attempts to analyse *Reformed* worship from a modern linguistic stance have been particularly scarce, while a truly dedicated and contemporary *pragmatic* account of it has, as far as we can tell, not yet been developed. Here, we shall undertake such an account with specific reference to Reformed liturgy in England. Diachronically, this means

that we shall keep as our continual backdrop the various past traditions of Puritan, Independent, Presbyterian, Congregational and Churches of Christ worship. Synchronically, it means that we shall essay detailed pragmatic analysis of worship in the United Reformed Church in the United Kingdom (URC) - a denomination whose formation in 1972 and expansion in 1981 merged these diverse traditions into a new ecumenical framework (Slack 1978). Partly, we have chosen this focus because the English Reformed tradition in general, and the majority English part of the URC in particular<sup>2</sup>, is the context in which we ourselves exercise ministry and which we therefore know best. Also, however, we shall demonstrate that in relation to pragmatics, English Reformed worship provides an especially strong and varied paradigm of religious language in sacral use.

## 1.2 Pragmatics and liturgy in the realm of semiotics

Modern anatomies of pragmatics commonly trace their origins to the American philosopher Charles W. Morris (Searle, Kiefer & Bierwisch 1980: xiii; Leech 1983: 6; Levinson 1983: 1; Leech & Thomas 1990: 173; Mey 1993: 35). In 1938, Morris proposed the 'outline' of a unifying 'semiotic' or 'science of signs' (1938; 79-80). Claiming precedents in Aristotle, Ockham and Locke, he

---

2. The nation of Wales forms one of the 12 Provinces of the URC, and there is a handful of congregations in Scotland. Overwhelmingly, however, the denomination is based in England. Historically, Celtic Reformed Christianity has many distinctive features in comparison with its English counterpart, and merits study in its own right (cf. Watts 1978).



presented the 'sign' as a basic phenomenon of communication or 'semiosis', describing it as 'the means by which something is referred to by someone' (1938:81; 123)<sup>3</sup>. More particularly, Morris drew his conception and terminology from the work of Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914), which he described as 'second to none in the history of semiotic' (1938:109)<sup>4</sup>. From these foundations, Morris cast the discipline of semiotic into a trichotomy where *syntactics* would examine 'the formal relation of signs to one another', *semantics* 'the relations of signs to the objects to which [they] are applicable' and *pragmatics* 'the relation of signs to interpreters' (1938:84, cf. Peirce 1960:2.227-2.308).

As expounded by Morris, pragmatics was meant to cover more than just language. Indeed, together with his fellow editors on the *International Encyclopedia of Unified Science*, Otto Neurath and Rudolf Carnap, his grand ambition was to provide all human expression and experimentation with a coherent analytical framework. Hence, his trichotomy was to be applied to 'art, testing devices, medical diagnoses, signalling instruments' and even 'smoke', as well as to 'human speech' and 'writing' (1938:79; 115). Hence, too, it was designed for 'an army of investigators', including not only linguists but also 'logicians, philosophers, psychologists, biologists, anthropologists, psychopathologists, aestheticians, semiologists' and 'rhetoricians' (1938:79-80).

---

3. Detailed studies of the origins of semiotics in the history of philosophy are provided by Eco 1976, Hawkes 1977 and Aarsleff 1982. Lange-Seidl 1986 traces this history with specific relation to the pragmatic dimension of semiosis.

4. 'Semiotic' as a term has since largely been superseded by the plural 'semiotics'. For an account of the terms' history see Sebeok, Hayes and Bateson 1964.

In both its taxonomy and its broad scope, Morris' semiotic resembled the earlier 'sémiologie' of Ferdinand de Saussure ([1915] 1959: 15-17), where 'signs' were perceived in cultural etiquette, military coding and symbolic ceremony as well as in language, and where language itself was viewed not only as a communicative *resource* but also as a constituent of communicative *action*<sup>5</sup>.

For our part, we should make it clear from the outset that while the significant 'sign-systems' of liturgy are many and varied - ranging from dress to posture and from gesture to proxemics - we shall not attempt to produce an all-encompassing version of what Gerald Lukken (1987) calls the 'semiotics' of liturgy. From time to time, our analysis will extend into the wider dimensions of sacral semiosis covered by a handful of scholars including Calloud (1972), Almadoss (1973) and Lukken himself (1987). We would also acknowledge at this point the work of *Semanet* - a study group based in the theology faculty at Tilburg, Holland, and dedicated to an application of A.J. Greimas' semiological theories to Biblical and liturgical texts (Lukken *et al* 1981; van Tongeren 1983; Joose & De Maat 1985, 1986; Lukken 1985, 1986a, 1986b, SEMANET 1987). In similar vein, Gerald Lardner's 1979 doctoral dissertation *Liturgy as Communication: A Pragmatics Perspective* has furnished us with useful background insights, but is nonetheless a more general application of communication theory to the Roman Catholic Mass which devotes

---

5. As Lukken (1987:109) points out, while being Morris' most immediate antecedents, Peirce and Saussure never met and 'probably did not even know about each other's existence'. The complementarity of their insights is all the more remarkable for this, but for an account of the subtle difference in emphasis between the two men's perception of the 'sign system' see Tobin 1990: 23-4, who argues that where Saussure's sémiologie was more *socially* focussed, Peirce's semiotic was more a framework for the interpretation of 'general' (ie. universal) linguistic patterns. This distinction to some extent anticipated later differentiations between 'Continental/European' and 'Anglo-American' pragmatics - see Section 2.3 below.

barely 10 pages to 'language', and which thus presents linguistic interaction as just one 'message system' among many (1979: 82-93). By contrast, we shall very specifically focus on the *language* of worship, and it is on the particularly linguistic dimensions of pragmatic analysis that we must now fix our attention.

### 1.3 An integrated schema for liturgical pragmatics

Having defined our basic objectives, we are now in a position to state more exactly how we intend to meet those objectives. In what follows, we suggest and present a pragmatics of church service language which, though still selective, would claim to be more systematic and up-to-date than previous work in this field. Indeed, it is precisely because 'liturgical pragmatics' has hitherto been so underdeveloped as a subject that we seek here to delineate it more coherently, as well as to offer a practical demonstration of its validity. Hence, Part I is devoted to 'anatomising' what is a potentially vast domain of interdisciplinary research. Here we seek first to relate the 'root concepts' of pragmatics to liturgy and then to suggest how the main branches of contemporary linguistic pragmatics might be used for liturgic exegesis, liturgiological conceptualization and practical sacral-discourse observation. In the process, we undertake a review of relevant past studies - a task made all the more important by the fact that these may be traced to a disparate range of disciplines and stand in urgent need of assessment under a unified

'pragmatics of liturgy' heading. Then in Part II we move from 'anatomy' to 'operative surgery', dissecting the linguistic data of liturgical performance using the main implements provided by modern pragmatics.

By going about our task in this way, we attempt to provide a properly linguistic basis for Margaret Mary Kelleher's general definition of worship as 'a form of ecclesial performative meaning - a ritual in which an assembly performs and enacts meanings and values that are constitutive of its identity' (1993: 306). In particular, we seek to fulfil this plan in both the 'anatomical' and 'surgical' Parts of our thesis by pursuing an integrated strategy adapted and developed from David Crystal's more widely sociolinguistic schema for religious language research (1976: 17). This means that our investigation will be constructed on three distinct but crucially interdependent foundations. These foundations are, respectively, *methodological, theoretical and empirical*.

Our concerns are *methodological* insofar as we contend that various modes of interpretation developed by pragmaticians can enrich traditional liturgics with helpful 'explicit criteria and techniques' for the analysis of sacral language usage (cf. Crystal 1976: 17).

Secondly, our project is *theoretical* insofar as it attempts to draw parallels between the more philosophically-determined 'patterns, categories and rules' of language and meaning which underlie contemporary pragmatics, and the broader concepts of language and meaning which are implicit in what Geoffrey Wainwright (1980) calls '*doxology*' - that is, the systematic theology of worship (cf. Crystal

1976: 17). Most especially, this theological perspective will be centred on the relationship between the Word of God and the words of worship, and will develop as a Protestant Reformed critique of the Catholic philosopher Jean Ladrière's model of liturgical-language 'performativity'.

Thirdly, our approach is *empirical* insofar as we recognise, with Kelleher (1993), that a fully-realised 'hermeneutic of liturgy' must engage with *specific* language-uses in *specific* congregations, rather than resting content with either introspective impressions or an exegesis of prayer-book texts conducted in abstraction from the very 'acts of worship' for which they are designed. As James Empereur has cautioned, 'several liturgical theologies have been put forth, but the easily observable fact is that too often the actual celebrations do not verify what is being asserted on the theoretical level' (1987: 8). Taking this warning to heart and suspecting its accuracy from our own conduct of worship over several years, we present an analysis based on an original corpus of data gathered in the 'field' of liturgical performance. As we demonstrate at greater length in chapter 4, this corpus is more diverse and extensive than any we have previously come across in the area of liturgical language study, and is a virtual novelty in the more specific sub-discipline of 'liturgical pragmatics'.

Following Crystal, it is our conviction that to be 'fruitful', the study of liturgical language should be at once methodological, theoretical and empirical along the lines just described. Reciprocally, it will become clear that the *integration* of these approaches serves not only our own immediate purpose, but also stands

similarly to benefit the application of pragmatics to other forms of ritual criticism.

Having thus outlined our *modus operandi*, we move on in the next three Chapters to define it more precisely, and thereby lay the ground for, and establish the parameters of, our subsequent in-depth analysis of liturgical language data.

## CHAPTER 2

### PRAGMATICS, LANGUAGE AND DISCOURSE: METHODOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR A NEW LITURGIC

#### 2.1 Definitional issues

We have already seen that pragmatics can impinge on a wide range of subject areas. Inevitably, once communicative signs are perceived 'in relation to their interpreters', important questions arise with regard to cognition, group behaviour, social systems and the like (Robinson 1986; Mey 1989; Leech & Thomas 1990: 186). Having said this, there is little doubt that as it has evolved in its own right into a 'mature' academic discipline (Horn 1988: 116), pragmatics has developed most substantially within departments, journals and textbooks of *linguistics* (Leech & Thomas 1990: 173-4). This is perhaps hardly surprising, since of all vehicles of human semiosis, language is the most pervasive and most distinctive.

We would reiterate that the study presented here is set very much within the broad stream of 'linguistic pragmatics' - although it must be admitted that even this designation is subject to varying *degrees* of language-specificity (cf. Haberland & Mey 1977; Levinson 1983: 2; Green 1989: 2), and that pragmatics has yet

completely to shake off past characterisations of it as the 'wastebasket' of linguistics (Bar-Hillel 1971b; Mey 1993: 12-15). From our point of view, the pursuit of linguistic pragmatics will mean that while we treat *users* and *situations* as essential components in what might be called the 'dialectic' of language and context, it is with the *linguistic* manifestations of this dialectic that we shall be primarily concerned. It is this detail, indeed, which distinguishes our study, as a *pragmatics of liturgy*, from more generally context-sensitive accounts of sacral meaning. While we shall from time to time be indebted to anthropological readings of religious ritual, we do not seek an 'anthropology of liturgy' such as has been essayed by Eliade (1959, 1965), van Gennep (1960), Tambiah (1979) and Grainger (1988). Likewise, though the empirical strand of our study certainly reflects Kelleher's advice (1993) that fieldwork on the church service would most usefully co-opt methods developed by ethnographers of communication, we do not aim to imitate the full-blown ethnographic surveys of liturgical information-exchange which have been presented by Pike ([1954-60] 1967) and Enninger & Raith (1982).

This specific commitment to the *verbal* aspects of liturgical interaction is reflected by the use in our title of the core term *discourse*. In the first place, 'discourses' are clearly linguistic phenomena, being 'continuous stretches of language longer than a sentence' (Crystal 1991: 106). At the same time, however, they must be interpreted as part of a communicative enterprise in which many relevant features are *extralinguistic*. This is to say, they must be seen to emerge from a 'dynamic process in which language is used as an instrument of



communication in a context by a speaker/writer to express meanings and achieve intentions' (Brown & Yule 1983: 26). From this point of view, *liturgical* discourses must be understood to comprise more than written service *texts*: they should, rather, be regarded as the verbal instantiations of sacral *enactment* (cf. Kelleher 1993: 196-7).

Now this overarching notion of 'discourse' is predicated on a number of key presuppositions and concepts - presuppositions and concepts which in turn underlie the distinction of pragmatics *qua* pragmatics, and which must thus inform any pragmatic analysis of liturgy. Let us briefly consider these and assess their significance for liturgical exposition.

## 2.2 Root concepts in linguistic pragmatics: their relation to liturgy

### 2.2.1 *Langue and parole*

One of the most fundamental 'background' formulations for pragmatics is Saussure's bi-partite decomposition of linguistic semiosis into *langue* and *parole* (Saussure [1915] 1959: 17-20). This was generated as a distinction between the common 'systems' of language which are shared generally by their speakers (*langue*), and the more specific and 'local' instances of language as it is actually

used in discrete contexts (*parole*)<sup>1</sup>. Thus for Saussure,

*Langue* is comparable to a symphony in that what the symphony actually is stands completely apart from how it is performed; the mistakes the musicians make in playing the symphony do not compromise this fact...The activity of the speaker [*parole*] should be studied in a number of disciplines which have no place in linguistics except through their relation to language. The study of speech is then twofold: its basic part - having as its object *langue*, which is purely social and independent of the individual - is exclusively psychological; its secondary part - which has as its object the individual side of speech, ie. *parole*...is psychophysical. (Saussure [1915] 1959: 18).

Immediately, this definition of language in general suggests parallels with the language of liturgy in particular. Partly, 'liturgy' can be said to consist in a number of canonical 'scores' or 'scripts'. From the Tridentine Mass to the *Book of Common Prayer*, from Calvin's *Forme des Prières* to Hunter's *Devotional Services* - these are the traditional objects of study among liturgists. In many cases, such liturgists may join theologians in seeking to identify a common global 'langue' underlying the composition of such texts, much as a musicologist might seek to define a common 'grammar' for the symphony (cf. Brilloth 1930; Dix 1945; Wainwright 1971). In like manner, Grainger posits 'the rite' as a generic 'ideal language for the expression

---

1. I have refrained from translating the terms *langue* and *parole* for the same reasons as Lyons *et al* 1987: 17: 'There are no generally accepted equivalents in English for *langue* and *parole*. The terms 'language' and 'speech' are sometimes used, but they are misleading in that they are more appropriate for the quite different distinction between the language and the medium in which it is primarily or normally manifest...And 'language'...translates both *langue* and *langage*, which are by no means equivalent in French and which were distinguished, on a theoretical level, by Saussure'.

of timeless truth' (1983: 328), while Ramshaw casts liturgical speech as a distinctive 'metaphoric rhetoric' (1986: 8-10). On the other hand, liturgy exists beyond the page and beyond the 'mind of man': it is *parole* as well as *langue*, 'performance' as well as 'authored work', 'corporate action' as well as 'symbolic code'. If first written down, it must be spoken and heard in particular ecclesial contexts; if 'spontaneously' conceived, it must be realised as local extemporary *speech* (Schmidt 1971: 8). This second, more contingent dimension of worship has been largely ignored in theology and liturgiology, and where studied at all, has tended to be the preserve of social scientists (eg. Samarin 1976a). In this sense, the study of liturgical language could be said to have implied a *dichotomy* of *langue* and *parole*, despite the fact that 'liturgy' itself exists as a paradigmatic *combination* of the two. By contrast, the integrated pragmatics to which we have committed ourselves seeks to show the *interdependence* of *langue* and *parole* in worship, by testing theoretical and methodological conceptions against the data of sacral performance. To this extent, liturgical 'meaning' will be seen as something which is ultimately and inextricably linked to liturgical language *use*.

### 2.2.2 Meaning as use

Now the functional and discursal facets of 'parole' were emphasised by several prominent liturgists and philosophers between Saussure and the

emergence of linguistic pragmatics *per se*. We noted the insights of Morris and Carnap in this regard at 1.2, but equally worthy of mention is the American structural linguist Leonard Bloomfield, who was insisting as early as 1933 that 'the meaning of a linguistic form' is 'the situation in which the speaker utters it and the response which it calls forth in the hearer' (Bloomfield 1933: 139; Wunderlich 1979: 258-61). Even more radically, the British polysystemicist J.R. Firth based his whole 'technique' for the analysis of linguistic meaning on a 'serial contextualisation of our facts, context within context, each one being a function, and organ of the bigger context' (1935: 33).

Similar emphases on language uses may be traced in post-war linguistic philosophy. The movement of the later Wittgenstein from logico-semantic to functional paradigms between the *Tractatus* of 1922 and the *Philosophical Investigations* of 1958 is encapsulated by his famous and influential dictum that 'for a large class of cases - though not for all - in which we employ the word "meaning", it can be defined thus: the meaning of a word is its use in the language' (Wittgenstein 1958: 20 (43)). As Thiselton has shown ([1975] 1986: 4), these emphases on 'meaning as use' are especially pertinent when it comes to interpreting liturgical language - given that 'in common with most religious or theological uses of language, [it] constantly employs ordinary words in special settings which decisively determine their meanings'. Indeed, the practice of 'liturgical pragmatics' must centrally involve an assessment of just how this 'decisive determination' takes place.

For Wittgenstein, the function of 'ordinary words in special settings' was most powerfully described in terms of '*language-games*'. Just as in chess one must know the 'moves' and 'rules' of the game before one understands the very particular meaning of the word 'king' in that context, so in general 'only someone who *already knows* how to do something with it can significantly ask a name' (1958: 15 (31), my emphasis). We acquire such knowledge by both 'watching how others play' and by *ourselves* deploying it as 'part of an activity' within a whole 'form of life' (*lebensform*) (1958: 11 (23); 27 (54)). As Christopher Thomas (1978: 8) has observed, these notions are especially pertinent for liturgy, which is an archetypal 'public language', evolved, regulated and 'passed down' within the ecclesial form of life, from one generation to the next; indeed, Thiselton ([1975]1986: 13) thus goes so far as to suggest that 'when he instances [as part of the variety of language-games] reporting events, telling stories, commanding, asking, thanking, praying, Wittgenstein might almost have been describing Christian liturgy'. Certainly, these emphases are interactive and communal rather than esoteric and 'mystical' in the gnostic or occult sense: liturgy, likewise, is not so much 'conceived' or 'intuited' by individuals as 'spoken' and 'enacted' by congregations (cf. Wittgenstein 1958: 11 (22)). This point, in fact, takes us on to our next set of key definitions.

### 2.2.3 Competence, performance and communicative competence

As appropriated by Chomsky (1965), Saussure's distinction between

language-systems as 'psychological' resources and language-activities as 'psychophysical' phenomena was articulated in a now much-cited duality between *competence* and *performance*<sup>2</sup>. 'Competence' for Chomsky was the proper subject of linguistics, representing as it did the 'underlying system of rules that has been mastered by a speaker-hearer and that he puts to use in actual performance' (1965: 4). Scrutiny of competence was thus essentially 'mentalistic' since it would be 'concerned with discovering a mental reality underlying actual behaviour'. For Chomsky, as for Saussure, inductive observation of 'performance' features like 'dispositions to respond, habits and so on' was significant only insofar as it provided evidence of this 'underlying mental reality'.

Now at first sight, it might be tempting to interpolate the above distinctions onto Morris' semiotic trichotomy and thus neatly cast pragmatics as the study of performance while seeing syntactics and semantics as belonging to the realm of competence. This interpolation certainly squares with Chomsky's own emphasis on grammar and also in fact reflects the depictions offered by, among others, Katz (1977:19) and Kempson (1977:69-74), wherein pragmatics is confined wholly to the realm of performance. There are, however, serious problems with such a division. Not the least of these stems from that *interrelation* of langue/competence

---

2. Chomsky himself (1965) associated Saussure's *langue/parole* distinction with his own notion of competence v. performance, although as Dell Hymes observes, he 'saw his own conceptions as superior, going beyond the conception of language as a systematic inventory of items to renewal of the Humboldtian conception of underlying processes. The Chomskyan conception is superior, not only in this respect, but also in the very terminology it introduces to mark the difference. 'Competence' and 'performance' much more readily suggest concrete persons, situations, and actions'. (Hymes [1971] 1972:273).

with parole/performance which Saussure and Chomsky themselves guardedly admit:

Doubtless the two objects are closely connected, each depending on the other: *langue* is necessary if *parole* is to be intelligible and produce all its effects; but *parole* is necessary for the establishment of language, and historically its establishment always comes first. How would a speaker take it upon himself to associate an idea with a word-image if he had not first come across the association in the act of speaking? Moreover, we learn our mother language by listening to others; only after countless experiences is it deposited in the brain. Finally, speaking is what causes language to evolve: impressions gathered from listening to others modify our linguistic habits. *Langue* and *parole* are thus interdependent; the former is both the instrument and the product of the latter. (Saussure [1915] 1959:18-19).

Actual investigation of language necessarily deals with performance, with what someone does under specific circumstances. We often attempt to devise models of inquiry that will reduce to a minimum factors that appear irrelevant to intrinsic competence, so that the data of performance will bear directly on competence, as the object of our inquiry. To the extent that we have an explicit theory of competence, we can attempt to devise performance models to show how this knowledge is put to use. (Chomsky 1980: 225).

Although Saussure and Chomsky alike are convinced that because of their contingent, parochial nature, performance phenomena may mislead the true linguistic scientist from his/her first task of defining *language universals* as intrinsic features of human cognition, one could as yet argue that the way we use language in real contexts is itself *also* attributable to some form of psychological predisposition or 'competence'. As it is, this more 'hybrid' notion of language and social interaction has been given seminal expression by Dell Hymes ([1971] 1972), and has been applied more explicitly to pragmatics by Jürgen Habermas (1979). Through the early 1970's, Hymes countered the 'abstraction' and 'idealization' of Saussure and Chomsky's competencism by collapsing sociocultural

and psychological paradigms of language-production into an integrated model of *communicative competence*.

We have...to account for the fact that a normal child acquires knowledge of sentences, not only as grammatical, but also as appropriate. He or she acquires competence as to when to speak, when not, and as to what to talk about with whom, when, where and in what manner. In short, a child becomes able to accomplish a repertoire of speech acts, to take part in speech events, and to evaluate their accomplishment by others. This competence, moreover, is integral with attitudes, values and motivations concerning language, its features and uses, and integral with competence for, and attitudes towards, the interrelation of language with the other code of communicative conduct...The internalization of attitudes toward a language and its uses is particularly important...as is internalization of attitudes toward use of language itself (eg. attentiveness to it) and the relative place that language comes to play in a pattern of mental abilities...and in strategies - what language is considered available, reliable, suitable for, *vis-à-vis* other kinds of code.

The acquisition of such competency is of course fed by social experience, needs, motives, and issues in action that is itself a renewed source of motives, needs, experience. We break irrevocably with the model that restricts the design of language to one face toward referential meaning, one toward sound, and that defines the organization of language as solely consisting of rules for linking the two. Such a model implies naming to be the sole use of speech, as if languages were never organized to lament, beseech, admonish, aphorize, inveigh (Burke 1966:13), for the many varied forms of persuasion, direction, expression and symbolic play. A model of language must design itself with a face toward communicative conduct and social life. (Dell Hymes [1971] 1972:277-8).

Although Habermas remains more firmly tied to Chomsky's psycholinguistic essentialism (1979: 19), he nonetheless shares Dell Hymes' recognition that the competence model must be extended to include the realm of *communication*. Specifically, this means that Habermas defines communicative competence as 'the ability of a speaker oriented to mutual understanding to embed a well-formed sentence in relations to reality', 'reality' here corresponding to 'situations of possible employment' and 'objects of possible experience' (1979: 24; 29-30). Crucially from our point of view, Habermas allows that such 'situations' and 'objects' may be



'bounded' to particular social 'institutions', and it is clear from his citation of Christening and marriage in this context that liturgy would yield up typical examples of such institutional bonding (1979: 38-9).

It is unnecessary here to chart in detail how Chomsky has responded to these redefinitions (but see Botha 1989: 75-6; 170-4); nevertheless, it is surely significant that his more recent work has actively entertained a notion of 'pragmatic competence' related to 'institutional' uses of language, and would thereby appear to have admitted a closer link between ideal/psychological and contextualised/sociological elements in discourse-generation (Chomsky 1980:224-5 n.8) What is clear from *our* perspective is that Hymes' insistence on a linguistics which accounts for speech as it is socially 'organized' in 'lament, beseeching, symbolic play' etc. is very much the sort of linguistics which will prove most profitable for the analysis of liturgy. As Lukken has noted (1987:112), to participate in a church service is at once to 'perform' a communal act and to realize a specific 'competence', gained through active induction to a 'congregation' and sustained by a personal commitment of faith and works. Indeed, our conviction is that it is specifically through the growth of pragmatics, with its sympathetic emphasis on meaning in relation to context and use, that linguistics has become equipped to tackle the ritualized discourses of major cultural institutions like the church. What is more, it will become clear that Hymes' conflation of competence and performance, of 'psychological' and 'psychophysical' analysis, is crucial for any appropriation of liturgical pragmatics which hopes to be broadly based. Thus, while

we shall draw upon the work of pragmaticians who start from both 'mentalist' *and* 'behavioural' perspectives, these will be seen as complementary for our purpose rather than as antithetical within it: we shall in this sense be aiming, with Robinson (1986:668), to move 'beyond... the dualism of *langue/parole* to a larger perspective on human activity'.

#### 2.2.4 Further definitive concepts: sentence vs. utterance; type vs token; sense vs. force

If traditional distinctions of *langue/parole* or competence/performance are to be qualified in the way just outlined, we might well turn to another contrast which is often made in definitions of pragmatics - namely the contrast between *sentence-meaning* and *utterance-meaning*. Deriving from the work of Strawson (1950), this, at least, does not explicitly rely on the kind of mind/action dichotomy questioned by Hymes. Rather, it turns on a distinction between syntactics, semantics and pragmatics which is essentially a distinction between *universal* and *particular* aspects of linguistic meaning. A recent explication of this approach is offered by Sperber and Wilson:

an utterance has a variety of properties both linguistic and non-linguistic. it may contain the word 'shoe', or a reflexive pronoun, or a trisyllabic adjective; it may be spoken on top of a bus by someone with a heavy cold, addressing a close friend. By definition the semantic representation of a sentence...can take no account of such non-linguistic properties as, for example, the time and place of an utterance, the identity of the speaker, the speaker's intentions, and so on.

The semantic representation of a sentence deals with a sort of common core meaning shared with every utterance of it. However, different utterances of the same sentence may differ in their interpretation, and indeed they usually do. The study of semantic representation of sentences belongs to grammar [ie. syntactics], the study of the interpretation of utterances belongs to pragmatics. (1987:9-10).

Once again, the contrast drawn here relates closely to the contrast we have drawn between 'liturgical language' as a generic concept and 'liturgical discourse' as a phenomenon of the local church service. As such, it also echoes the distinction originally mooted by Peirce ([1960]: 2.245, 1933: 4.357) and later expounded by Bar-Hillel (1954) and Lyons (1977: 13-18), between *types* and *tokens* in language, where types represent whole classes of linguistic units and tokens the specific realization or '*instantiation*' of such classes 'at a particular place in space or time' (Lyons 1977:14).

Even more specific to pragmatics is Leech's kindred discrimination of *sense* as the 'semantic representation of meaning through some formal language or notation', from *force* as meaning which is determined not only semantically but also 'pragmatically' - that is, meaning which is 'worked out' in particular communicative settings by speakers and hearers (1983:30).

Given the stress placed by these three categorizations on the specific *circumstances* of language-production, it becomes plain that pragmatics in general, and liturgical pragmatics in particular, must operate with a suitably nuanced model of *context*. It is to the formulation of such a model, and the application of it to the sacral domain, that we now turn.

### 2.2.5 Context

Once meaning is viewed in terms of *parole*, 'use', 'utterance' and 'communication', the linguistic analyst must inevitably develop an account of context. Indeed, from Bar-Hillel onwards, (1954: 359; 374-5), context has been presented as a quintessentially 'pragmatic' variable.

On the most general level, context may be understood as 'a term referring to the features of the non-linguistic world in relation to which linguistic units are systematically used' (Crystal 1991: 79). More precisely, however, it has been categorised by linguists as impacting on language at three main levels: *context of culture*, *context of situation* and *context of utterance*. The first two terms were coined by the anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski (1923, 1935) - and interestingly enough, were developed in his extensive analysis of ritual among the Trobriand islanders of the South Pacific. They were then made the basis of a thoroughly functional linguistics by his pupil Firth (1957), whom we have already cited as a seminal proponent of 'meaning as use'.

*Context of culture* for Firth was the widest sphere of linguistic instantiation, indicating the most macro-social constraints on verbal communication. In liturgical terms, it would include the historical, theological, denominational and environmental background of worship as practised by different communions. For a village Church of England service, it would thus comprise such things as 'English Christianity', 'Anglican identity', 'the influence of Cranmer' and 'rural demography'.

*Context of situation* since Firth has more particularly been defined in terms of 'relevant features of participants, objects and verbal effects' (Firth 1957: 182). Liturgically, it would in this sense contain phenomena bearing more directly on the conduct of worship by a specific congregation at a specific time and place - eg. the layout of the church building, the roles of different speakers in the rite, the theme of the service, the size and composition of 'the people', the churchmanship of the president etc..

As for *context of utterance*, Lyons (1977: 570ff.) and Crystal (1991: 79-80) define this as even more explicitly relevant to individual speech-tokens within a discourse. Thus the context of utterance of an epiclesis or absolution would typically be constituted by their 'priestly' expression, by any special gestures which might accompany them, by their referring respectively to 'eucharistic elements' and 'sinful confessors', and by their relative position within the discourse as a whole.

This last feature of 'discoursal context' relates more specifically to what general linguists and pragmaticians alike have come to call *co-text* (Mey 1993: 184) - although Firth, at least, had already admitted 'verbal action' into his 'context of situation' (1957: 182). As it is, liturgy provides ample evidence that in terms of 'pragmatic meaning', sharp divisions between 'linguistic' and 'non-linguistic' context are often rather arbitrary. As Levinson has remarked, 'aspects of linguistic structure sometimes directly encode (or otherwise interact with) context', so making it 'impossible to draw a neat boundary between context-independent grammar and context-dependent interpretation' (1983:8). Here, to quote Levinson again, 'we

come to the heart of the definitional problem: the term *pragmatics* at the same time covers both context-dependent aspects of *language structure*, and principles of language usage and understanding that have little or nothing to do with linguistic structure. It is difficult to forge a definition that will happily cover both aspects' (1983:9; cf Lyons 1977:591). For Peter Auer (1992: 26), an important question which arises from this ambiguity concerns 'how much of context is "brought along" and how much is "brought about" in interaction' - that is, from our standpoint, how much *liturgical* meaning is determined *in advance* of particular services by church tradition and congregational expectation, and how much emerges 'eventfully', *within* each particular act of worship *as it proceeds*. We shall be dealing with these more detailed issues of context further in Part II, but it is worth noting here that even that which is 'brought along' to liturgy will *itself* often be liturgical. Thus, while it is most fundamentally a 'situated' form of discourse, we can still see that liturgy is encoded in written church service texts which, though primarily 'types', can nevertheless *themselves* assume a 'contextualising' or instantiating function in relation to other discourses. This function can be both *diachronic* (that is, historically developed) and *synchronic* (that is, contemporaneous).

From a diachronic perspective, it is clear, for example, that the Church of England's *Book of Common Prayer* (1662) has exercised a profound 'contextualising effect' on the *Alternative Service Book* of 1980, the latter to a large extent being a modernisation of the former (C.E.L.C 1980b: 9-18). The same holds - albeit somewhat less directly - for today's Reformed rites in relation to Calvin's

*Forme* ([1542/5] 1980). The process is more complicated still, however, because even Reformation service texts drew much of *their* form and substance from the Roman Mass (Spinks 1984a:53), which in its turn evolved from ancient Patristic liturgies (Old 1975), which in their turn reappropriated a large amount of Biblical material (Daniélou 1956). Then again, form criticism on the Psalms, on the Johannine Passion Narrative and on other texts like Philippians 2: 6-11 and Colossians 1: 15-20 has indicated their likely origin as 'oral' liturgical orders (Wainwright 1980: 149ff.; Jennings 1985: 200).

If this pattern of what Kathleen Jamieson (1975) calls 'rhetorical antecedence' bears out the contextualising potential of worship texts *through* time, we can perceive a similar process at work across different traditions *in* time. This particularly applies to our own century, where the ecumenical movement has spawned any number of hybrid rites, and where even denominational service books - particularly in the Free church tradition - display considerable degrees of intertextuality (eg. Jasper 1978; Perry, Goodland & Griffiths 1992; URC 1989:131-3). Perhaps even more significantly for linguistics as a whole, it is worth recognising, with Crystal & Davy (1969:148), Fenn (1982) and Ferguson (1985: 206), that the language of certain liturgical texts has itself sometimes permeated and thereby contextualised the discourses of quite secular milieu to a considerable extent - the influence of Cranmer's phrasing on a whole range of English language varieties being a prime example (cf. Lewis 1954:204-221; Robinson 1973).

One final and obvious witness to the contextualising force of texts themselves

is afforded by the old Tridentine Mass of the Roman Catholic church. While every 'performance' of this 'script' was clearly different according to time, location and participants, there is little doubt that its deliberately global language-mode (Latin), together with its universal form and content, operated actively to *shape* and *define* the parochial context, rather than existing apart from it.

As we progress, it will become clear that where theologians and liturgiologists have often stressed the importance of sacral context while yet failing to analyse how exactly it affects liturgical discourse, linguistic pragmatics affords a more thorough means of demonstrating how each interacts with the other.

### 2.3 Modern linguistic pragmatics: its scope and application to liturgy

Now clearly, the various 'background' concepts just mentioned could have a wide-ranging application to all kinds of functional language-interpretation. They have featured very prominently, for example, in the models of philosophical description and hermeneutic theory developed by, among others, Gadamer ([1965] 1989), Fuchs (1970), Ricoeur (1981), Tracy (1981) and Thiselton (1992). Having said this, we would underline that we shall be concerned with such concepts here only where they relate to contemporary linguistic pragmatics as it has been defined by its principal exponents and publications (Levinson 1983; Leech 1983; Green 1989; Blakemore 1992; Mey 1993; *Journal of Pragmatics* 1977 ff.). Thus, for



example, it should be realised that linguistic pragmatics often regard Wittgenstein as having had little direct influence on the development of their subject (Levinson 1983: 227; Leinfellner-Rupertsberger 1990). Likewise, though the definition of 'context' in pragmatics has clear affinities with, say, Dilthey's notion of 'life-world' ([1927] 1962) and Gunkel's Form Critical concept of *Sitz im Leben* (1901, cf. Sawyer 1967), we would point out that these affinities have already been thoroughly explored by Thiselton ([1975] 1986; 1980; 1992), and would emphasise once more our resolve to confine ourselves to the specific analytical terms and frameworks of pragmatics *per se*. This is not to deny, of course, that implicit connections can be made - and we shall certainly make them where apposite. Nonetheless, our chosen analytical framework remains quite specifically linguistic-pragmatic rather than more generally linguistic, philosophical or hermeneutic. What is more, it should be understood that although our pragmatics will be shown to have a crucially theoretical dimension, the points at which this will be seen to connect with a wider sphere of thought will be very particularly the points at which it can be seen to bear upon *doxology* or *liturgical theology* - a field whose philosophical and hermeneutic bases may be plain, but which still represents a much more specific area of investigation than either 'philosophy' or 'hermeneutics' as such. Put simply: the interdisciplinary status of this study derives from its attempt at a rapprochement between contemporary linguistic pragmatics, liturgic exegesis and the Christian theology of worship.

The use of the word '*contemporary*' to describe the particular sort of

pragmatics with which we shall be dealing is crucial, because although it was Morris who coined the term in the '30's, the emergence of 'pragmatics' as a major branch of linguistics has occurred rather more recently. For Horn, in fact (1988: 113), its 'coming of age' as an academic subject can be traced only to 1983, and the publication of Levinson's 'sound' and 'superior' textbook - although the essential shape of the discipline can be seen as having formed in the '40's and 50's. More precisely, contemporary pragmatics can be thought of as having developed in two overlapping 'tendencies'. These tendencies have been identified by various commentators as respectively 'Anglo-American', and 'Continental'/'European' (Levinson 1983: 2ff.; Robinson 1986: 653; Leech & Thomas 1990).

'Anglo-American' pragmatics owes much of its genesis to Morris' collaborator Rudolf Carnap. Though Carnap shared Morris' vision of 'the semiotic' as a grand framework for the sciences (1938: 148), and although both men were committed positivists, Carnap came to relate Morris' pragmatic trichotomy more centrally to the workings of *language* and, by implication, to the discipline of formal linguistics. For Carnap, 'pragmatics' entailed the investigation of 'explicit reference made to the user of [a] language' within a sentence or sentences ([1942] 1948:9). Although it might at first involve an 'observation' of how various 'speaking habits' determine that certain terms will have certain designata in certain contexts, Carnap nonetheless saw pragmatics as little more than a *precursor* to the central tasks of syntactic and semantic description. Thus, for him, 'Once the semantic and syntactical features of a language have been found by way of pragmatics, we may

turn our attention away from the users and restrict it to those semantical and syntactic features' ([1942] 1948: 12-13). In essence, Carnap's concern was thus to understand how more general features of context are 'written into' or 'encoded by' *grammar* and *vocabulary*, and it is this concern which has most classically distinguished 'Anglo-American' pragmatics.

Despite Carnap's endorsement of 'preliminary' pragmatic fieldwork, those who have followed in his footsteps have in fact more characteristically relied on study of those lexico-syntactic phenomena which refer to an external situation - namely *deictic* or *indexical* terms like 'here', 'there', 'now', 'then', 'I', 'you', 'this' and 'that' (Peirce [1960]: 2.305; Bar-Hillel 1954; Montague [1968] 1974; Levinson 1983: 54-96). There can be little doubt that a *comprehensive* pragmatics would have to include this area of deixis - and indeed, it occupies a prominent place in the pragmatic agenda of Levinson (1983: 54-96) and Green (1989: 17-36) in particular. Neither can there be much dispute that an exhaustive pragmatics of *liturgical* language would find much to analyse in the deictic elements of church service language. If deixis is taken principally to encompass expressions referring to persons, time and place (Mey 1993: 92), its significance within Christian rite very soon becomes obvious.

Frequently, first-person singular pronouns like 'I' or 'my' are uttered not by individuals but by a corporate body - the congregation. Even where more explicit plurals are deployed, one is led to consider the assumptions they make about the faith of individual participants, and thus to examine the 'continuity' of the human

subject - that is, to compare the different discursal 'identities' and 'roles' adopted by people inside and outside the ecclesial context ( cf. Levinson 1983: 68). Further still, even in regard to more immediate denotations, liturgical person-deixis can display a plurality which is far from straightforward: when used as a *Benedictus*, we might well ask, for instance, whether 'Blessed is *he* who comes in the name of the Lord' refers to the Messiah (cf. Psalm 118), to the communicant approaching the table, or to both? As Ladrière points out (1973: 56), such personal pronouns allow individual speakers to take on the identity of the ritual community and so relate to themselves various multi-meaningful sentence-functions enacted by, and definitive of, that community.

Where temporal deixis is concerned, it would appear that the 'universe' of worship discourse constitutes a case worth investigation. As Eliade (1959) has shown, the liturgical 'clock' and 'calendar' operate in a highly distinctive way. The process of Christ's passion may be condensed into a single service marking the 'Stations of the Cross', such that present indicatives like 'Jesus is condemned to death' and 'Jesus dies' come liturgically an hour apart where *historically* they refer to events separated by a whole day (CAFOD 1987: 26-8). Tenses and referents are also 'de-synchronised' in apparently nonsensical ways to make theological points - for example about that conflation of time and eternity which is implied by doctrines like the Communion of Saints. Hence, one contemporary URC eucharistic prayer speaks for modern Gentiles thus:

- (1)                      When we were slaves in Egypt  
                              you led us to freedom through the Red Sea .  
  
                              (URC 1989: 11)

Adverbials, too, can often be deictically polysemic in liturgy: the 'now' of the *Nunc dimittis* is at once centuries old (Luke 2: 29-32) and utterly contemporary - it is both 'cited' and 'presented', functioning simultaneously as the quotation of one man's words and a corporate, 'universal' request:

- (2)                      Lord, lettest now thy servant depart in peace .  
  
                              (C.E.L.C 1980: 95)

In spatial terms also, liturgical discourse establishes frames of reference which pose intriguing challenges for deictic exposition. A church sanctuary can constitute both a local and a 'global' setting: the communion table is simultaneously a specific congregational focus and yet also somehow a gathering point for people 'from east, west, north and south' - people who sit down to eat '*in* the kingdom of God' (URC 1989: 9). Similarly, although churches are *geographically* part of 'the world', liturgical discourse often distinguishes life '*in*' that world from what is going on '*in*' worship:

- (3)                      ...as we eat and drink at his command  
                              unite us to Christ  
                              as one body in him  
                              and give us strength to serve you in the world.

(URC 1989: 15)

These issues of liturgical deixis are clearly important and warrant further investigation. Having said this, we have chosen not to devote a specific chapter to them here, for the following reasons. First of all, there is some dispute about the status of deixis within pragmatics as a whole. As Green admits (1989: 17-35), it is the most narrowly 'referential' of all pragmatic sub-disciplines. Indeed, it has even been dismissed on this basis as nothing more than 'a sophisticated way of doing semantics' (Haberland & Mey 1977: 5). Certainly, Enç (1981) has added weight to such a view by suggesting that indexicality should logically apply to *nouns*, as well as to the grammatical classes with which it has more usually been identified. Similar doubts would appear to account for Leech's having treated deixis as peripheral to his survey of pragmatic principles (1983: 11). Even Bar-Hillel's work (1954) saw 'indexical expressions' as primarily *describing* contexts rather than *interacting with*, or *shaping* them in a more dynamic way. This is not to dismiss Bar-Hillel's formulation of context *per se*; it is just that our quest here is for a pragmatics tailored specifically to the linguistic manifestations of liturgical *action* rather than liturgical *denotation*. For us, as for Lardner, 'the primary purpose of liturgical language' is 'not its content or information transfer', but rather its 'performance'. Likewise, since 'the performed nature of language in worship is probably one of the most neglected dimensions in theory and practice', it will be this, rather than the more 'Referential Pragmatics' of deixis and indexicality which

will receive most attention here (Lardner 1979: 92; Leech 1983: 11).

None of this means that we shall neglect deictics altogether; it is simply that where relevant, they will be subsumed under more broadly performance-oriented headings. Hence Ladrière's relation of personal pronouns in liturgy to the distinctively corporate 'affective behaviour' of the gathered church will be seen against the wider vistas of 'institutionalisation' and 'rituality' in Chapter 8. In similar vein, the more recently-researched phenomena of 'social' and 'discourse' deixis (cf. Levinson 1983: 85-94) will be dealt with, respectively, as features of 'pragmatic indirectness' in Chapter 5 and multiple utterance analysis in Chapter 7. Otherwise, while we note that the referential qualities of 'liturgical time' and 'liturgical space' have been dealt with elsewhere by theologians like Bouyer (1963: 151-205), Grainger (1974: 107-72) and Ramshaw (1986: 57-79), we offer a more particularly *pragmatic* meditation on them at various points throughout Part II, where we consider the *eschatological* thrust of Ladrière's doctrine of liturgical language 'performativity'.

If deixis lies in something of a 'transitional zone' between semantics and pragmatics, it still resembles more unambiguously pragmatic branches of the Anglo-American tradition in having first emerged as a *philosophical* concern. Just as Bar-Hillel developed Carnap's nodding endorsement of the 'linguistic habits of users of ordinary language' (1954: 359), so the Oxford philosophers J.L. Austin, J.R. Searle, P.F. Strawson and H.P. Grice in turn became associated with a full-

blown school of 'Ordinary Language Philosophy'.

Probably the best-known text in the history of pragmatics is Austin's *How To Do Things With Words* (1962). Posthumously edited from lectures delivered in the '50's, this book presents a challenge to the purely referential and 'truth-conditional' semantics of logical positivism (cf. Ayer [1936] 1971; Flew 1966). Indeed, it is a challenge which becomes more radical as Austin's argument unfolds. Austin begins by making a crucial distinction between purely referential or *constative* utterances, and utterances whose purpose is not to *describe* something so much as to *do* it (1962: 6). This second group of expressions Austin termed *performatives*, and it is significant for our purposes that he saw them occurring particularly within ritual settings - eg. 'I baptise', 'I declare (them to be husband and wife)' etc. (1962: 11). As Austin's exposition proceeds, however, the original constative/performative duality begins to collapse, and is replaced by a conception which sees *all* expressions as 'speech acts' dependent for their meaning on the 'total speech situation' in which they arise (1962: 148). Rather than being assessed according to their respective 'truth' or 'falsity', these speech acts are represented as 'felicitous' or 'infelicitous' according to the various 'conditions' which different circumstances impose on their effective usage (1962: 12ff.). This thoroughgoing relation of linguistic meaning to *function* and *context* is schematized by Austin's identifying various '*illocutionary forces*' with particular types of acts done *in* saying certain things, rather than with mere acts *of* saying defined in purely lexical or phonetic terms (1962: 131ff.).

As developed by Austin's pupil John Searle (1969, 1979a), and as refined by



Bach & Harnish (1979), Recanati (1987) and others, 'Speech Act Theory' has considerable potential for the explication of liturgical discourse. Its emphasis on language as a means to action; its sensitivity to performance, ritual and local 'rules' as components of linguistic meaning; its refusal to reject all empirically unverifiable statements - and religious statements in particular - : these features must qualify it for a primary place in any pragmatics of liturgy. Indeed, as well as devoting the whole of Chapter 5 to a 'speech act' analysis of worship, it is there that we shall strike keynotes for themes developed through the remainder of Part II's in-depth exegesis of Reformed liturgical discourse.

One of these themes occupies a further area of study formulated within Anglo-American pragmatics - that is, *implicature*. As Leech points out (1981: 275-300; Leech & Thomas 1990: 189), implicature represents a 'pragmatic' extension of the well-established logico-semantic domain of *entailment* and *presupposition* - a domain mapped out in some detail by Frege ([1892] 1952) and Russell (1905). As with much on the semantic-pragmatic interface, the lines of demarcation here are somewhat blurred. Essentially, however, while both have to do with what is *assumed in* a sentence rather than with what is *asserted by* a sentence, entailment and presupposition tend to be more focussed on the *logically demonstrable* aspects of what is assumed, whereas implicature tends to be more focussed on the *behaviourally demonstrable* aspects of what is assumed (Leech 1981: 295-300; Crystal 1991: 276). We shall trace the interconnection of presupposition and implicature at the start of Chapter 6, but not surprisingly in view of our stress on

liturgical *performance*, it is the relation of *implicature* to liturgy which will then be pursued at length.

Building on Strawson's insight (1950: 330) that much of what is assumed in actual communication goes beyond a 'formalist' and 'antimetaphysical' logic of entailment and presupposition, Grice recognised that 'there are very many inferences and arguments, expressed in natural language and not in terms of [symbolical logical] devices, that are nevertheless recognizably valid' (1975: 43). Though such 'inferences and arguments' are not recoverable in a strict 'mathematical' sense, they still typically conform to certain 'Maxims of Conversation' established within a realm of mutual co-operation and 'shared contextual knowledge'. Just as Austin had stressed that successful 'uptake' of an expression was often as crucial to its felicity as successful articulation (1962: 117), so Grice sought more systematically to identify the principles applied by interlocutors to ensure clear interaction. In all of this, Grice's contention that what is 'meant' very often transcends what is 'said' (cf. Grice 1957) will be seen as vital for the analysis of *liturgical* language, where 'meanings' are so very often 'implicated' by the historical, ceremonial, canonical and socio-psychological conditions of enactment, rather than being entailed or logically presupposed by the 'statements' and 'propositions' of sacral texts.

Where Grice's work on implicature forms the analytical backdrop to the first part of Chapter 6, it is an extrapolation *from* this account which we apply to liturgy in the second part of the same Chapter. The development in question is fairly

recent, but has already been cast as a 'paradigm shift' for pragmatics as a whole (Leech & Thomas 1990: 201). Where Grice identified 'relevance' as a major factor in successful communication while realising the need to explore it further (1975: 46), Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson (1986; 1987) have come to define it as *the* governing concept - not just for pragmatics, but for all branches of communication theory. Sperber & Wilson recognise that analysis of communication must turn not so much on a scrutiny of 'shared assumptions' or 'mutual knowledge' *per se*, but rather on the discernment of *which* assumptions are operative in any given exchange (1987: 698). As a key to such discernment, they suggest the principle that all acts of communication carry a 'presumption' of optimal relevance. Specifically, this presumption exists as a 'cost/benefit trade-off' between *informativeness* and *processibility* (1986: 125; 1987: 703). Put crudely: the more 'new information' is conveyed by a speaker, the harder it will be for a hearer to process, whereas the more familiar, or 'old', information is conveyed, the easier it will be to process. Thus, where informativeness reaches a maximum and processibility a minimum, the result will be clichéd, formulaic or banal expression; by contrast, where processibility is hard-won, the result will be correspondingly esoteric or dense expression such as might be found in very 'difficult' poetry (1986: 48).

This conception of relevance could be applied to liturgy at many levels, but most especially, it has the potential to illuminate long-standing ecclesiastical debates: about 'aesthetic' versus 'vernacular' worship; about 'religious' versus 'colloquial' speech, and more generally, about whether liturgical discourse exists to

confirm a committed body of believers in the creeds and practises of their church, or to offer a public 'point of contact' between 'religious' and 'secular' life, through which 'the world at large' can become more familiar with the gospel. These are the main issues which will be broached in the second half of Chapter 6, just as we shall test there the many finer nuances of Sperber & Wilson's theory.

One of the distinguishing features of both implicature and relevance theory is that although Grice and Sperber & Wilson each contemplate their place in *other* forms of linguistic communication, they have so far been applied almost exclusively to single utterances or single exchanges within one-on-one conversation. In this respect, they resemble Searle's construction of speech act theory (even though, as we make clear at 5.4 ff., Austin actually appears less restricted to the straight 'Speaker-Hearer' model). This emphasis in turn raises the question of just how far *liturgy*, displaying as it does a multiplicity of participants, a characteristic 'scriptedness' and a historic use of unison responses, can be interpreted as 'dialogue' or 'conversation'. In Chapter 7, we address this question with reference to recent insights from what May (1993: 181) calls 'extensional' pragmatics - that is, the attempt by linguists like van Dijk (1977, 1981), Hancher (1979) and Fotion (1981) to apply 'speech act' and 'Gricean' principles beyond isolated utterances and interchanges, to whole *stretches* of discourse. In the same Chapter, we also follow Levinson (1983: 284-370) and Green (1989: 141-57) by subsuming into *our* pragmatics certain procedures developed by ethnographers of

communication for the analysis of whole 'sequences' and passages of conversational interaction. Through all this, we argue that although there are close similarities between liturgy and conversation, these are offset by several characteristic differences - differences which in their turn help to distinguish liturgy as a particular *type* of speech activity.

These discourse-analytical attempts to 'place' liturgy as a particular form of speech are extended in Chapter 8 into the wider cultural context or 'universe' of sacral action. Having appropriated the 'micropragmatic' Anglo-American perspectives of speech act theory, implicature and relevance, and having then assumed the more 'macropragmatic' agenda of compound-utterance interpretation, we here move into the more fully Continental tradition of 'socio-pragmatics' (Leech 1983: 10; Mey 1993: 286ff.). Taking our cue from Levinson (1979: 368), we present liturgy as an archetypal *activity type* - that is, a speech event which is very sharply defined within, by and over against society, and which is 'constituted' and 'constrained' by various 'rules' imposed through the 'institution' (the church) on participant roles, allowable contributions, proper settings etc.. To this extent, we follow Güllich (1980) in arguing that the study of church service discourse provides an 'ideal example' of institutionalised communication; we then bear this out with an assessment of our original field data conducted according to Dell Hymes' classic model for 'the ethnography of speaking' (1972b).

These, then, will be the main methodological components of our 'integrated' liturgical pragmatics. Their range consciously reflects Ferrara's call for a holistic approach to pragmatics based on the fact that 'every utterance is both a string of symbols somehow connected and standing in relation to some mental construct, and a full-fledged social action, oriented to the normative expectations of a community' (1985: 138). By the same token, they express concerns which are at once 'functionalistic', 'psycholinguistic' and 'conversational' (Horn 1988: 114), focussing on the structure of sentences as related to those who utter them, the 'knowledge' of discourse-participants, and observed 'uses' of language in particular settings (cf. Richards, Platt & Platt 1992: 285). In Leech's terms, this means that our study will at different points be 'pragmalinguistic', 'general pragmatic' and 'socio-pragmatic': it will deal, variously, with 'the resources' which liturgical language *itself* appears to provide for 'conveying particular implications'; the 'general conditions' of the liturgical use of language defined apart from 'more specific "local" conditions' on such use, and the 'sociologically' oriented analysis of specific acts of worship 'in the field'.

Having said all this, the pragmatics which we deploy here will reflect the *corporate, public* character of liturgy in being weighted somewhat more towards the *societal* pole of the discipline than towards its 'pure' or 'universal' pole (cf. Mey 1993: 286). In this sense, it is, as we have already made clear, not an *exhaustive* pragmatics of liturgy. Nonetheless, in being tailored to suit the *predominant* dynamics of sacral celebration, and being forged with reference to a large corpus of

liturgical data, it does seek to be more programmatic than prior attempts at a 'pragmatics of liturgical language'. In order to confirm this, we shall benefit now from reviewing the legacy of 'liturgical pragmatics' - such as it is - which we are seeking to inherit and develop.

#### 2.4 Pragmatics, religious language and liturgy: precedents and points for development

Given the obvious potential of a pragmatic approach to liturgical language, it is surprising how rarely such an approach has featured in assessments of church service interaction. What is more, this neglect seems just as marked from the side of Theology as from the side of Linguistics (Jennings 1985: 186). In *general* terms, theologians have been keener to broach language than linguists have to broach religion, but the fact remains that neither group has shown much inclination to deal more particularly with the *pragmatic* facets of *sacral* discourse. Hence, not everything which might come under the broad heading of 'religious language study' can concern us here. We have already made it clear that we shall draw on wider-ranging studies in the ethnography, sociology and semiotics of religion where they appear to us to illuminate the specifically linguistic-pragmatic approach to liturgy which we are pursuing. From the same standpoint, we would distinguish our task from those undertaken by such protean accounts of religious *symbolism* as have been offered by F.W. Dillistone (1955; 1986) and Edward

Robinson (1987), and from more diverse critiques of 'religious discourse' framed in terms of political, cultural or literary theory (Tracy 1981; Reuther 1983; Prickett 1986; Boone 1989). In addition, though there now exists a healthy body of work in what might be called 'Biblical linguistics', we note with Cotterell & Turner (1989: 13-19) that much of this has remained philological, grammatical or semantic in focus, and thus seems largely to have ignored the advances made by modern pragmaticians (eg. Güttgemans 1974; Caird 1980; Frye 1982). Where there *are* exceptions to this trend (and see Thiselton 1992: 283ff.) we shall appropriate them insofar as their pragmatic exegesis of *Scripture* can be seen to have ramifications for the exegesis of *liturgical* texts. Even where analyses have dealt with liturgical language *per se* however, their methods and conclusions are not always germane to our approach. This is especially true where their methodologies have been mainly philological (eg. Schmidt 1950; Brook 1965).

If the proper interdisciplinary status of our study can be established partly by defining what it is *not*, then we need also to place it in relation to previous work which can in varying degrees be said to have 'laid the ground' for what we are attempting. This past work can be divided roughly into the following categories. First, it includes studies by theologians and philosophers of religion who, while not consciously engaged with linguistic pragmatics, have nonetheless discerned pragmatic *dimensions* within religious discourse. Next, there are analyses from theology and philosophy which have explicitly used pragmatic methodologies to interpret the language of religion. Then, our concerns may be compared more



directly with studies of *liturgical* language undertaken by philosophers and theologians - most of which have been general, but some of which have used overtly pragmatic frameworks. Finally, our project can be set within the relatively small stream of work undertaken by *linguists* on religious and liturgical language.

Let us now assess each of these categories in more detail.

#### 2.4.1 General theological and philosophical studies of religious language

Though the late 50's and 60's saw what Mananzan calls a 'linguistic turn' in the philosophy of religion, developed to defend religious language against logical positivist detractors like Ayer and Flew, most of the protagonists in this turn still shadowed the 'verificationist' agenda, even if only to criticise it. On the whole, this issued in a reactive *extension* or *adaptation* of empirical and truth-conditional semantics to *include* religious discourse, rather than a proactive endorsement of ordinary language philosophy as a radical *alternative* paradigm for the interpretation of sacred speech. The consequence of this was that pragmatic principles tended to be hinted at rather than fully played out.

A prime example of this reactive approach is found in the early work of Ian Ramsey on religious language (1957; 1965) - though we shall see in 5.5.3 that he subsequently embraced Austin's ideas with some enthusiasm (1968). Instead of co-opting then-emergent concepts of meaning-as-use from the Oxford school, this

earlier work sought to demonstrate that 'far from being necessarily religious, logical empiricism provides us with a tool which can be of the greatest service to theology' (1957: 5). Specifically, this conviction was articulated through the characterisation of religious expression as something constructed from 'object language which has been given strange qualifications', and which 'centres on "God" as a keyword which itself becomes the subject of significant tautologies' (1957: 5; cf. 1965: 73). Thus, insofar as God is modelled as a 'cause', our 'theological story' is seen to be 'based on empirical fact' - that is, on a 'familiar' observable phenomenon -, but insofar as this 'empirical' attribution is qualified in the description of Him as '*First Cause*', the model is extended logically into a realm of 'disclosure' and 'mystery' which is not 'mystery' in the sense of ignorance, but rather 'mystery' in the sense in which the existential tautology 'I'm I' must act as a 'logical stop-card' for the causality of all human phenomena (1957: 61-5; 182-3 cf. Exodus 3). The same logical extension of 'empirical models' by 'odd qualifiers' was also applied by Ramsey to other religious phrases like '*infinitely wise*', 'creation *ex nihilo*' and '*eternal purpose*' (1957: 66-89). The conclusion which Ramsey inferred from all this was that, far from being *un*-empirical, religious language is simply '*more than empirical*' (1957: 183), arrogating to its firmly verifiable foundations the key dynamics of narrative, 'discernment' and 'commitment' (1957: 182-6). Indeed, far from seeing these more 'personalist' dynamics as distinct from the world of 'facts', Ramsey argued that the very definition of 'fact' itself should be expanded to include them:

We reach *some* 'facts' by selection and pointing them out - and for some purposes, and in some contexts we can even 'pick out' persons. But we reach *other* 'facts' by their disclosing themselves to us, challenging us - and these are such facts as the 'fact' of Duty, of the Moral Law, or of persons... Persons challenge us, not as those facts which are 'ideas', but 'notionally' in activity. (1965: 89)

Now clearly, there are here the *seeds* of a 'pragmatic' conception. Indeed, Ramsey's attempt to make the 'personal' and 'actional' facets of expression part of meaning *per se* became a popular strategy in the work of those other theologians who at much the same time sought to present religious language as *continuous with*, rather than *separate from*, the realm of logico-semantic exegesis. At a general level, Ferré (1962: 164-5), Dilley (1964) and Knox (1966) elaborated Ramsey's assertion of 'truth' encompassing both non-cognitive expression and sacral activity by arguing that criteria of 'logicality' and 'factuality' are *themselves* to some extent products of 'metaphysical' systems. For Knox in particular, Biblical exegesis was seen to have suffered from an undue polarisation between 'propositional' and 'existential' discourse - a polarisation which had seen mythology misrepresented as 'scientific fact' on one side and 'sheer nonsense' on the other.

Even before all this, James Wilson (1958: 16-31) had suggested 'religious experience' as the ultimate criterion of verification for religious statements, with the (for us) significant proviso that the relevant 'experience' here was shared, 'public' and 'co-recurrent', rather than purely 'psychological', 'autobiographical' or 'existential' (1958: 23). Wilson went on to assert that since there are large groups of believers who clearly *do* use the same system of verification for religious assertions by means of their *common* experiences, and since these experiences are repeated in

the same types of context, they allow for the *expectation* or *prediction* of other experiences. Wilson concluded on this basis that such 'communal' religious assertions are 'similar in point of logic to the case with assertions like 'There is a table'. My having had certain visual experiences (seen a table) enables me to predict other experiences (touching it, putting things on it, etc.)' (1958: 23-4). Wilson's emphasis on the *congregational* or *ecclesial* mutualization of sacred speech carries obvious implications for the specific analysis of *liturgical* discourse. Indeed, it was Ramsey himself who concluded from a similar perspective that the 'more-than-empirical' character of religious language was most archetypally present in *worship* (1957: 185; 1965: 89). More radically still, R.M. Hare (1955), J.J.C Smart (1955) and Willem Zurdeeg (1958) all came to isolate the unique 'logic' of theological discourse in the 'worshipful' function of theological speech. More extreme yet was Ninian Smart's proposition that 'logically variegated' analyses of religious language are impossible, thus making definitions of religion in terms of 'content' and 'reference' (ie. 'abstract' doctrines) 'a snare' which diverts attention from the proper focus of analysis on the *practice* of religion in such areas as worship, sacrifice and mystical contemplation (1958: 197).

Now these proposals might allow us to suggest that the first wave of theological resistance to logical positivism had a 'crypto-pragmatic' orientation. All the same, those who made such proposals appear still to have been constrained by logico-semantic *preoccupations* and *methods*. So, Ninian Smart excepted, while hypothesising more 'personal' and 'situational' models of meaning, they still

typically sought to ascribe 'universal' and 'essential' denotations to discrete theological 'phrases', without considering in any great depth the capacity of belief, setting and performance to alter such denotations in *particular* cases. To this extent, their *de facto* presentation of religious *discourse* was very much more deductive and decontextualised than the presentation we have defined for ourselves here.

To these reservations must be added the more explicit problem that none of the works mentioned directly engage with the foundational pragmatic concept of 'performative speech' as developed by Austin from 1939 onwards (Austin 1962: vi), nor with the subsequent refinement of this notion in terms of 'illocutionary force' which was essayed by him at Oxford and Harvard from 1952 onwards and then published as *How To Do Things With Words* in 1962. The reasons for this are partly chronological and partly down to the time it takes for ideas to disseminate. Nonetheless, it is notable that even by the late '60's and early '70's, overtly Austinian treatments of religious language were still very thin on the ground. In 1967, John MacQuarrie identified as 'most important' for the study of 'God-talk' a 'current tendency to place language in the *context of situation* out of which it arises' (1967: 117; cf. Austin 1962: 139; 148). This he represented as a promising point of convergence between 'the analytic school' and those 'more existential accounts of the matter' on which his own work was largely based. Still, however, MacQuarrie's guiding precedents were Ramsey and Ferré rather than Austin himself (1967: 118-9).

A somewhat more specialised assessment of religious language in relation to

'functions', 'users' and beliefs' issued from Dallas High (1967). Focussing particularly on the discourse of creeds, High demonstrated how credal statements cannot finally be interpreted as statements of fact or object-description. On the contrary, he echoed Austin (1962: 67ff.) in suggesting that the 'first person' form of creeds places them on a different logical ground from other doctrinal formulations. Specifically, he said, it establishes a connection of first person utterance with 'personal backing' on the one hand and 'religious acts of believing' on the other. In this sense, creeds most immediately concern 'existential questions' about 'the relation, loyalty, trust or value I may place in another person or something personalized' (1967: 176). Although such readings might obviously have been developed along Austinian lines, High's study - like the earlier work of William Horden on sacred speech (1964) - is constructed, rather, on the model of Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*. As we shall confirm in Chapter 8, this model can be seen *retrospectively* as a vital precursor to later socio-pragmatic formulation; it nonetheless remains the case that any connections between High and Horden's methodologies and the methodologies of contemporary linguistic pragmatics remain implicit rather than explicit.

The same may be said of Kenneth Burke's attempt at a new 'rhetoric of religion' or 'logology' (1970). Burke's approach was certainly functional: indeed, his core analyses of 'verbal action' in Augustine's *Confessions* and Genesis 1-3 went so far as to eschew essentialistic theologizing altogether. Rather, his aim was 'simply to ask how theological principles can be shown to have usable secular

analogues that throw light upon the nature of language' (1970: 2). As with Ferré, Dilley and Knox however, Burke sought to do this not so much by reducing religious discourse to positivistic models of 'persuasion' and 'communication', as by upholding the position that 'in the study of human motives, we should begin with complex theories of transcendence (as in theology and metaphysics) rather than with the terminologies of simplified laboratory experiment' (1970: 5).

A year later, Gerhard Ebeling's ambitious attempt at a 'theological theory of language' ([1971] 1973) took very seriously the effect of local and social 'situations' on the meaning and understanding of sacred words (56-8). Likewise, Ebeling affirmed that 'it would be inadequate to base a concept of language solely on the potentiality of language, and to regard every concrete use of language merely as the application of language to discourse and conversation - as though the concrete use contributed nothing to the understanding of language as such' (89). In addition, Ebeling confirmed the importance of 'mutual understanding' and the 'person addressed' in any genuine formulation of religious meaning. Further still, he suggested that just as 'theology is...a theory of the language of faith' (187), so the language of faith 'is not something distilled out of the ordinary language of the world and separate from it', but rather something 'deeply rooted in the language of the world'. Given such strongly 'pragmatic' convictions, it is perhaps surprising that Ebeling did not acknowledge the linguistic-pragmatic *systematizations* of them which were by then available from both Austin and Searle (1969); indeed, as James H. Ware has since remarked (1993: 45 n33), his study is 'disappointing' insofar as it

shows 'almost no recognition of what had been happening in English language Philosophy of Language' at the time.

#### 2.4.2 Theological and philosophical applications of pragmatics to religious language

If the studies mentioned above leave us to infer rather than borrow insights for our own study, a small amount of material from theology and the philosophy of religion has more directly co-opted the work of linguistic pragmatists. The majority of this dates from around or after Ebeling's 'theological theory of language', but there is one notable - if somewhat neglected - exception.

Donald D. Evans was a pupil of Austin's and in his 1963 volume *The Logic of Self-Involvement* he sought to relate the theory of speech acts to Christian language about divine creation. 'Self-involving' language for Evans was typically 'performative': as such, it was shown to carry implications concerning the speaker's 'attitudes', 'commitments' and 'values' (56-7), as well as often also expressing 'feelings, opinions and intentions' (80). Noting that 'existential' theologians like Rudolph Bultmann had presented *Biblical* language in similar terms as a 'language of faith', Evans insisted that 'like other biblical theologians', Bultmann yet failed to provide an 'adequate account of *how* any language can involve a speaker logically in something more than a mere assent to a fact' (11, my emphasis). (We have seen already that this same oversight had also characterised the work of doctrinal



theologians and philosophers of religion writing around the same time). In seeking to provide this 'missing account', Evans suggested that Austin's work could supply 'a fundamental insight concerning linguistic or logical self-involvement' (11). Evans' attempt to 'map out' the territory of this new province took creation-language as a paradigm not only because it archetypally yokes divine words ('Let there be light') to divine acts ('There was light') (151-73), but also because it mediates an 'expressive' and an 'impressive' force (174-219). This is to say, like other forms of sacred discourse, though it carries a 'causal power' to bring about the very events and states of affairs to which it refers (220-52), it simultaneously both evokes the being and will of the addressor (in this case, God Himself), while bearing profoundly on the faith and conduct of the addressee (humankind). Crucially for Evans, *Biblical* discourse is distinguished by the fact that it holds these causative and affective dynamics together. To conceptualize such discourse purely in terms of 'causal power' would be to descend into 'a fanciful sort of magic', whereas to conceptualize it as purely expressive or impressive would be to rob it of its capacity to 'do things' (73-4). Thus even the creation-utterances of God Himself are more than purely mechanistic: they not only 'bring the world into existence'; they also 'appoint' to it and its inhabitants a certain set of 'tasks' or purposes consistent with the purpose of God himself. Likewise, from the human side, Thiselton summarises Evans' argument aright when he says that to *call* God 'Creator' is 'to use language which is self-involving in terms of our status, role, commitment, and orientation; it is not simply a flat statement about a process of

cause and effect' (Thiselton 1992: 275). Supremely for Evans, this combination of causal power and expressive/impressive force is embodied in the incarnation of God's Word as Jesus Christ, whose own speech is at once state-altering (eg. in His healing commands) and inter-relational (204ff.).

Now even this brief summary suggests rich possibilities for our own study - possibilities which arise both from what Evans affirms *and* from what he fails to affirm. While Evans focussed on just one aspect of *Biblical* language, there is clearly scope for an application of his ideas to liturgical language. The language of baptism, absolution and blessing could, for instance, be interpreted as comparably 'causal', 'expressive' and 'impressive'. Then again, just as Evans' work merits *application* it also warrants *adaptation*. Where Evans constructed his thesis largely on the basis of Austin's account of 'performative language', he recognises only in a footnote that this account was ultimately *superseded* by the concept of illocutionary force (38 n1). Clearly then, the way is open for appropriating and updating Evans' work for our purposes: as Thiselton has remarked, his research has been 'seriously undervalued' since its publication. Indeed, one of the main reasons why we shall champion the work of Jean Ladrière as a key resource for the *theoretical* strand of our study is that Ladrière has stood virtually alone in according Evans' ideas the attention they deserve (Ladrière 1966, 1967, [1970] 1972, 1984 : 91-140). We shall deal more specifically with Ladrière at 3.2, but first we must briefly review the *other* general theological and philosophical studies of religious language which have made explicit use of linguistic-pragmatic approaches.

Like Evans, Jerry Gill presented Austin's work as 'opening up altogether new possibilities for 'God-talk" (1969: 36). In precise terms, he saw in it the potential for breaking down traditional 'dichotomies' and 'stalemates' between action (reality) and language (thought), by 'blending them in a functional manner' (32-3). Gill inferred from this functional approach that statements can have 'cognitive and non-cognitive force simultaneously', and that 'no valuational judgement is without its factual dimension [while] no factual judgement is without its valuational dimension'. These inferences in turn led Gill to suggest that religious language be seen as operating 'multidimensionally' at various points on a *sliding scale* from 'objectivity' to 'subjectivity', rather than being stereotyped as entirely non-factual and affective (36). Not surprisingly in view of what we have already said about them, Gill traces hints of this new approach back to Wittgenstein and Ramsey - although it is particularly relevant for our 'empirical' purposes here that he regards Austin's theories as having necessitated 'a far more thorough examination of *the actual uses to which religious language is put* - especially given that 'almost all the standard positions have been proposed with precious little spadework upon which to base them' (36). Ironically, Gill stops short of undertaking such 'spadework' himself, and in this he has hardly been alone among those who have hypothesised the applicability of speech act theory to religious phrases (cf. the brief reflections of Hick (1964: 44) and others cited by Anders Jeffner (1972: 88n1)).

Jeffner (1972: 90) did at least offer and expound a few examples of religious 'performatives', and even went so far as to classify them according to the varying

degrees of general *assent* which might be expected of their respective 'correctness conditions' (1972: 90ff.). His work is important for its confirmation of a 'theoretical' element within any legitimate pragmatics of sacred discourse, derived from the fact that theological doctrine *itself* imposes correctness conditions by operating as a major embodiment of *faith in* or *commitment to* such discourse (1972: 93). Thus, although Jeffner followed Gill in commending a more 'empirical' study of 'religious performatives' (1972: 92-5), he rightly stressed the dangers of assuming that such a study could obviate the 'faith dimension' and thus reduce religious performatives to utterances which, while locally 'felicitous', might yet be cast as globally 'fictitious'. These, Jeffner pointed out, were precisely the means by which Paul van Buren (1963: 183ff.) had earlier sought to 'secularize' sacral language, but they are flawed precisely because they sidestep *de facto* phenomenological questions about the *interrelation* of metaphysical belief with situational meaning (Jeffner 1972: 104). In this sense, Jeffner was justified to conclude that merely 'observing' and 'describing' the performative use of religious language cannot in itself solve the 'fundamental problems' of such language: one must factor a philosophical-doctrinal analysis into one's 'empirical' and 'methodological' exposition if genuinely representative insights are to emerge. Hence, though briefly stated and relatively undeveloped, Jeffner's prescriptions very much presage our own commitment to an integration of liturgical dogmatics with 'hardcore' field analysis and orthodox linguistic description.

In similar vein, James M. Smith and James W. McClendon (1972, 1975)

contended that after Austin, 'understanding religious talk through the illocution [could show] the way in which the representative and affective elements are connected to one another and to the utterance as a whole' (1972: 55). Specifically, and once again, this meant that the 'confessional' dynamic of God-talk should be treated just as seriously as its 'descriptive' and 'speech-active' dynamics (1972: 60-3; 1975: 67-70). Like Gill and Jeffner, Smith & McClendon were keener to schematize the overarching theoretical implications of a speech act approach to religious language than to analyse illocutions as they occur within actual streams of discourse. The same limitation applies to those who have discussed speech act theory in relation to more specific areas of religious language like metaphor (Soskice 1985: 67, 90-3) - an issue to which we shall return in 5.6.1 ff.

A further group of scholars have sought to bring speech act theory more to bear on the texts of *Scripture*. After tentatively suggesting the self-involving and illocutionary dynamics of Jesus' parables (1970: 462-3), Thiselton (1974) followed Evans in asserting, against several Old Testament specialists, that the operational force of Hebraic blessings and curses derived not from the supposedly 'innate power' of certain Hebrew words - that is, from a 'causal' view of speech action - but rather, from *institutional* features of Israel's life which established the contexts in which effective speech acts could occur (cf. Thiselton 1992: 293). In passing, Thiselton suggested the same analysis for acts of baptism (1974: 294) and as we shall see in a moment, he has since made the parallels between Biblical and liturgical speech action much more explicit.

The ideas formulated in Thiselton's 1970 and 1974 papers subsequently reappeared and matured in his two major works on Biblical hermeneutics, *The Two Horizons* (1980: 127ff.) and *New Horizons in Hermeneutics* (1992: 272-307). In particular, the latter text offered a rare appreciation of developments in pragmatics since Austin and Searle: Thiselton not only engaged with François Recanat's significant re-definition of speech act theory (1987); he also realised that Grice's work on implicature affords a prime means of exploring the factors which function 'behind' a biblical text and which yet contribute importantly to its meaning (1992: 365).

Gricean ideas had in fact already informed the parable research of T. Aurelio (1977) and E. Arens (1982), with Arens offering yet further confirmation of what we have said about the necessity of relating descriptive analysis to broader *theological* theories of speech-as-action (1982: 374). Aurelio and Arens' work had in its turn been taken further by Johannes Du Plessis, who appropriated Leech's extensive elaborations of Grice's conversational maxims (1983) to an exegesis of the parables. This exegesis aimed to define their 'primary function' within the whole 'narrative world' of the gospels, as being 'to establish Jesus..the narrator..in an authoritative position towards his addressees' (1988: 5). In particular, Du Plessis' work anticipated our own in its recognition that communication operates within an interaction of power-relations and discourse-roles. He realised crucially that the response of the 'receiver(s)' is often pragmatically as significant as the 'intention' and 'message' of the 'sender', but even more than this, he recognised that the

*predisposition* of Senders and Receivers towards a religious message is affected at least as much by theological, social-semiotic and institutional prerequisites as by purely cognitive factors. We shall return to these matters throughout Part II.

A similar preoccupation with authority and the Sender-Receiver relationship marked the various uses to which speech act theory was put by contributors to Hugh White's special edition of *Semeia*, entitled 'Speech Act Theory and Biblical Criticism' (White 1988). Here, however, associations were extended beyond pragmatics *per se*, into the wider reaches of literary, cultural and anthropological theory. Thus, Ronald Grimes saw in Austin's account of communicative 'infelicities' (1962: 25-52) a useful framework for ritual criticism in general and exegesis of Old Testament rituals in particular. Another contributor, Susan Lanser, co-opted speech act theory's insistence on meaning as a product of 'use in context' to refute anachronistic or 'revisionist' readings of Genesis 2-3 which had sought to infer gender equality from these chapters on the basis of propositional and grammatical analysis alone. Meanwhile, White himself projected speech act philosophy as 'mediating position' between the radically existentialist concept of word-event in Bultmannian 'new hermeneutic' and the radically anti-intentionalist concept of *écriture* put forward by post-structuralists like Roland Barthes and Jacques Derrida. From a similar starting-point, Michael Hancher related Evans' and Thiselton's disavowal of the purely 'causal' view of performatives to Barthes' and Derrida's presumptions about 'the death of the Author'. Hancher pointed out that although Barthes read Austin 'counter-theologically' as confirming his (Barthes')

own view that language is 'self-referential' and possessed of an 'innate' force distinct from intention, this was in fact a misreading of Austin, for whom speech acts were made or broken by different contexts and the *purposes* which those contexts generated. Against Derrida (1977a, b), Hancher followed Searle (1977) in maintaining that Austin's 'intentionality' did not in fact entail an implausible 'total knowledge' or 'cosmic consciousness' of context akin to that often assigned to God Himself. Rather, even 'sacred' speech acts, said Hancher, could be seen as 'heightened or idealized versions of ..ordinary performative discourse' - that is, dependent for their felicity on acquaintance with relevant local circumstances, contingencies and traditions (1988: 35-6)<sup>3</sup>. Interestingly, Hancher illustrated this contention with reference to eucharistic discourse as well as scriptural narrative, and we shall have cause to return to his more systematic insights into the peculiar conditions of ritual discourse in Chapter 7.

#### 2.4.3 General theological studies of liturgical language

Just as we can group theological studies on religious language into crypto-pragmatic and overtly pragmatic strains, the same distinction holds for work more especially dedicated to the language of *worship*. Since our chief purposes in

---

3. Hancher does not mention Sperber & Wilson, but his concluding remarks very much bear out their emphases. See 6.3 below for a fuller discussion Relevance Theory in relation to liturgy.



this project are first to 'anatomize' and then put into practice a new discipline of 'liturgical pragmatics', it is worth scanning such precedents in order to determine how they might best be 'taken up' and woven into a coherent methodological tapestry. As we do so, we note that while Wainwright has offered a useful digest of *general* work on 'the language of worship' (1978: 465-8), this is very brief, somewhat outdated and only incidentally concerned with pragmatic readings of liturgy. Here, our scope is more specific: we shall deal first with *implicitly* pragmatic liturgiologies, and then review studies which have quite explicitly related pragmatics to church service discourse.

Louis Bouyer's linking of 'Word' and 'Rite' (1963: 53-62) formed part of a wide-ranging work on ritual, but reflected Austin's main emphasis in its application to Christian worship of the Jewish philosopher Martin Buber's landmark study *I and Thou* ([1937] 1958). Bouyer took from Buber the concept of 'the word' as a 'way to action' - action 'through which man asserts himself as such' and through which 'he who speaks, by the very fact of speaking, interposes his own personal existence into the natural course of events' (1963: 54-5). What is more, there are proto-Gricean overtones in Bouyer's having further drawn from Buber the insight that 'speech is not only personal, [but]...interpersonal', such that 'dialogue is inherent in the intentionality of all speech' (1963: 55). From these premises, Bouyer compared Roman Catholic and Protestant worship, arguing that whereas the former has often descended into a 'magical' conception of sacral words by according them an intrinsic power divorced from their 'primordial' religious meanings, the latter has

tended to 'overobjectivize' liturgical language by 'reducing' everything to its 'obvious' denotation, and so conveying 'a mere repetition of verbal pedagogy undertaken for the ignorant' (1963: 58-9). This perception, together with Raymond Chapman (1973: 598) and Joseph Gelineau's (1978: 77) subsequent confirmation of the sin of 'over-informativeness' in liturgy will bear heavily in our own critique of Reformed worship in Chapters 5-8. In a sense, Bouyer's stance paralleled Evans' more general attack on views of Christian discourse polarised as either 'causal' or 'propositional'.

Just as Bouyer was writing against a background of liturgical revision - not only by the Second Vatican Council (1962-5) but also by Protestant churches all over the world (Chandlee 1986: 312-3), so a good deal of work on the language of worship produced by theologians in the '60's and '70's was preoccupied with prayer book 'translation' and 'modernisation'. Thus, following inferences drawn from Stella Brook's definitive study of Cranmer's English (1965: 192-219), John Westlake (1969) argued that the difficulties of producing a modern 'vernacular' liturgy stem largely from the fact that 'written' and 'spoken' modes of communication are nowadays far more bifurcated than they were in the mid-seventeenth century. Then again, Westlake remarked that 'even when it was first published, the language of the *Book of Common Prayer* was never actually used by ordinary people outside the framework of religious worship' (1969: 149). Indeed, stressing the point that different contexts demand, and are identified by, different 'registers', Westlake took a conservative line on both liturgical and Biblical revision (cf. Westlake 1971/2),

preferring slightly archaic but consistent sacred styles over what he saw as characteristically modern tendencies towards incongruous stylistic juxtaposition and a 'lack of differentiation' between liturgical and 'conversational' registers (1969: 149ff.).

Soon afterwards, Raymond Chapman (1973) and David L. Frost (1974: 161-2) took a very similar line, although for Frost the key area of divergence between Cranmerian and contemporary style was *syntactic* rather than *pragmatic*, the BCP being typified by a 'Ciceronian' syntax of 'balance and antithesis' with many different 'adjectival and adverbial qualifications', in comparison with modern preferences for 'concision...and placing the weight of meaning on verbs' (1974: 156).

Although more modernistic in his attitude to liturgical reform, Daniel Stevick (1970) upheld the concept of liturgy as a properly 'heightened' form of discourse, more akin to 'aesthetic' expression than to everyday talk. Against the background of what he called 'a crisis' in liturgical language, Stevick suggested that while 'we know what prayer sounds like in the language and for the world of Spenser and Shakespeare', it is less clear what prayer should sound like 'in the language and for the world of Randall Jarrell, Paul Goodman, James Dickey, Le Roi Jones, or Samuel Beckett' (1970: 145). Thus, he urged liturgists to call on 'the artists, writers, social analysts, popular songwriters and dramatists of our time', not only to contribute new words of praise, but to re-contextualize old words in relation to new ones and new words in relation to the eternal Word of the gospel (1970: 59-60;

164-5). Stevick's was probably the most extensive reflection on worship language to have emerged from the 'high tide' of liturgical reform, and although his linguistic reference-points were more philological, phonological and semantic than strictly pragmatic, his consideration of *style* in liturgical reform links in very much to the spheres of 'relevance' and 'social discourse' which we have adopted for our own analytical agenda. In particular, the interaction of 'old' with 'new' expression, and the connected questions of whether liturgy is a 'code for the committed' or a bridge between the 'sacred' and the 'profane', are matters which go to the very heart of liturgical pragmatics. In Chapters 6 and 8 we shall pursue such matters more thoroughly, and demonstrate that an overt engagement with modern pragmatic methodologies can serve to sharpen the perceptions about sacral language revision mooted by theologians like Westlake, Chapman, Frost and Stevick over 20 years ago.

If liturgical reform prompted some theologians and liturgists to use linguistics to discern how sacral discourse should be *presented*, other theologians and liturgists have since drawn on the work of linguists when tackling even more fundamental questions about the *identity* and *function* of such discourse in the modern world. Starting with Chomsky's core distinction between the 'deep' and 'surface' structures of language, Grainger (1974: 1-22; 1983) argued passionately for the unique integrity of ritual discourse over against local or contingent reference. Rites, for Grainger, were seen to impact upon human experience as 'deep structural acted

symbols' permitting all manner of surface 'linguistic flexibility'. Viewed in this way, ritual emerged as 'the native tongue of religious awareness', which 'when it speaks, speaks of itself' (1983: 329). Primarily, this 'ritual speaking' was done through 'actions' and not through 'words'; it therefore constituted 'a direct presentation of religious reality' (1983: 328-9). By thus defining ritual in terms of 'speech activity' rather than logico-semantic denotation, Grainger took an implicitly radical 'pragmatic' line on sacral meaning. At the same time, however, his appropriation of Chomsky's biological and psychological universalism meant that he tended to assume common 'global' components of ritual without presenting much objective evidence for this assumption. To be fair, many pragmaticians have also worked from an assumption that there are 'universals' in language use (Leech 1983; Brown & Levinson 1987; Habermas 1979: 1-68) and from this point of view, they have retained the Chomskyan 'deep structural' paradigm even while extending it into a more behavioural realm (cf. Butler 1988: 84ff.). Nonetheless, while taking Grainger's 'distinctive' theory of ritual very seriously, the empirical strand of our investigation will seek to check it against naturally-occurring examples of Christian worship discourse as it is used 'on the ground'. The validity and extent of this data-testing is explained fully in Chapter 4.

If Grainger's work presented ritual linguistic practice as the essential product of humanity's common mental and anthropological make-up, Herman Schmidt (1971) had earlier proved more specifically conversant with the vocabulary of contextual linguistics when assessing the 'function' of language in Christian

worship. Discerning in the 'literature of the science of liturgy' an 'almost complete lack of serious interest in the sciences of language' (1971: 2), Schmidt proceeded to outline a possible framework for liturgical language analysis. This framework was riveted together by 24 'conclusions', several of which pinpointed the importance of expounding worship-language in relation to its specific 'discourse situation' and to the 'community' which uses it. (1971: 10-11, 13, 19, 25). Although Schmidt did not discuss the work of speech act theorists or sociolinguists *per se*, his agenda represented a very promising orientation of the work done in philosophical theology by Ramsey, MacQuarrie *et al*, towards an engagement with more decidedly applied linguistics. For all Schmidt's efforts however, Theodore Jennings was still able to remark some 14 years later on 'the underdeveloped state of research in this area of liturgical language' (1985: 186).

Like Schmidt, Jennings' references remained almost exclusively theological rather than linguistic, and he singularly failed to acknowledge the contribution which might have come from the by now well established province of linguistic pragmatics. Having said all this, he did offer some apposite insights for our purposes. Echoing both Bouyer and Grainger, Jennings insisted that within the 'grammar' of God-talk, liturgical discourse should not be confused with propositional or purely 'explicative' language: rather, it had an intrinsic 'character of address'. Being thus directed to God, it was to be thought of dialogically rather than descriptively or prescriptively (that is, 'kerygmatically'). As such, its 'situation of address' was to be interpreted as apprehending 'the rupture of structures of

experience as an address (speech-event) provocative of address (repetition, invocation, response)' (1985: 208). We shall explore this model of utterance-and-response through Chapter 7. It will also emerge there that a strong 'theoretical' critique of Reformed worship can be inferred from Jennings' designations.

Although it is clear from what we have been saying that work on the language of liturgy by theologians and philosophers has been sporadic, the sense that a more concerted effort should be made in this area was underlined by the publication in 1990 of liturgists David and R.C.D. Jasper's *Language and the Worship of the Church*. Although a self-confessedly diverse collection of essays including historical, rhetorical, biographical and hymnodic analyses, Jasper & Jasper did recognise that liturgy cannot 'insulate itself from the serious and profound developments in philosophy which have influenced our understanding of the nature and possibilities of language, utterance and communication'. They also remarked that though judgements about liturgical language come 'almost invariably from the standpoint of aesthetic appeal', there was a clear need for more scientifically-based linguistic exegesis (1990: 1-2). Jasper & Jasper duly addressed these demands by including appropriate articles from Martin Warner and David Crystal - articles which belong respectively within two very scant traditions of *explicitly* pragmatic liturgical interpretation, as carried out by philosophers and theologians on the one hand and by linguists on the other. It is to these barely-defined 'traditions' that we now turn.

#### 2.4.4 Theological and philosophical applications of pragmatics to the language of liturgy

While it is certainly true that philosophers and theologians have been slow to appropriate linguistic pragmatics into their work on liturgy, Gail Ramshaw (1986: 7; 1988: 119-20) is unjustifiably dismissive of those few who *have* tried to do so. No doubt there has been some divergence in the application of Austinian and post-Austinian terminology to worship discourse (1988: 120), but Ramshaw misrepresents the situation when she adds 'neither has this approach...helped much in the religious understanding of speech in public worship' (1986: 7). Ironically, Ramshaw herself has touched on many issues which might actually have benefited from a more serious engagement with modern linguistic pragmatics - ranging from the 'generic' status of liturgy (1986: 1-10; 1988: 109-116), through deictic considerations about liturgical time and space (1986: 57-79), to the relation between liturgy and the 'institution' of the church assembly (1986: 102).

More positive adoptions of pragmatics by theologians have been both specific and broad in scope. Thus Mary John Mananzan (1974) claimed an 'original' fusion of Austin's speech act model with Wittgenstein's later philosophy to produce a thoroughgoing analysis of credal statements (1974: 151). Her principal aim in so doing was to assess 'whether the creed is, in its primary intention, constative or performative'; she also undertook to chart 'the linguistic topography of the credal statement by comparing/contrasting it to other forms of discourse in general and to other uses of religious language in particular' (57). In thus analysing creeds,



Mananzan dealt with a form of discourse whose usage is at once typically 'doctrinal' and typically 'liturgical', and which could thus be read 'propositionally' as well as 'performatively'. For these reasons, she distinguished it as the very 'kernel' of religious language (151). Mananzan went so far as to conclude, in fact, that *all* major modes of sacred discourse, including 'prayer' and 'preaching' are grounded in 'descriptive claims' even as they also necessitate 'performance' and 'decisional' self-involvement (153). More precisely still, Mananzan argued that speech act approaches afford theology a 'profitable' way in to the analysis of such discourse because they offer it a means of dissolving 'cognitive-emotive, descriptive-evaluative dichotomies... by turning its attention away from fruitless polemics about these and spending its efforts at adopting the insights of linguistic analysis in its own reflection' (154). Mananzan practised what she preached by extending and adapting Austin's ideas in line with the peculiar dynamics of her chosen sacral subject. Hence creeds, like other genres of religious language, were presented by her as 'multidimensional' - 'the crystallization not only of *one* speech act, but of several speech acts which differ according to their various uses in different contexts' (153). The perspicacity, significance and refinability of these insights will become clearer as we tackle the key issues of 'pragmatic ambivalence' in 5.5.2, 'truth v felicity' in 5.5.3 and liturgical speech act 'compounding' in 7.1ff. It should be noted, however, that in view of Mananzan's detailed work on them, and because their recitation is rare in English Reformed worship, we ourselves shall not deal at any great length with creeds in particular.

Where Mananzan had yoked Wittgenstein and Austin to investigate 'meaning' in one liturgical modality, Thiselton ([1975] 1986) brought them together within a much broader programme for liturgical language interpretation. Like Mananzan, Thiselton saw within both men's work the basis of a liturgical 'hermeneutic' which would do much more than present sacral discourse as a 'report' on worshippers' 'states of mind' ([1975] 1986: 17). Thus from the perspective of 'meaning as use', Thiselton stressed that in a Christian rite 'We are truly sorry and repent' constitutes an *act* of repentance, not the communication of information' ([1975] 1986: 18). Similarly, from Austin's point of view, 'when in a marriage service the bridegroom says "I take you", he is not *informing* anyone about his inner intentions, but *marrying* his bride' ([1975] 1986: 18). In such examples, Thiselton drew a somewhat sharper dichotomy between 'stating' and 'doing' than Mananzan allowed for religious discourse. This was due to the fact that like Evans, Thiselton failed sufficiently to demonstrate the extent to which Austin's theory had developed from a theory of 'performative utterances' into a theory of 'illocutionary forces'. Indeed, he seemed to confuse the two when categorizing 'types of [liturgical] performatives' according to Austin's taxonomy of *illocutions*. We shall explain the importance of these fine distinctions more fully in Chapter 5, but we shall also see there how Thiselton has suggested his more recent and more nuanced work on the pragmatics of *Biblical* discourse might be applied to liturgy (1992: 299). It will also become apparent that Thiselton has been as consistent in his emphasis on 'relevant conventional procedures' in relation to liturgical discourse felicity as he was in his

earlier accounts of Old Testament speech activity (1970, 1974, cf. [1975] 1986: 19).

Just as Thiselton saw in Austin's work a model for the non-cognitive interpretation of liturgical language, so G. Vincent (1979) suggested that in *theological* terms, an analogy could be drawn between this model and the radical redefinition of sacramental doctrine promoted in the work of John Calvin. Thus, where Austin's study of language uses posed 'an enormous challenge...to all theories which treat language merely as a vehicle for transmitting information', so Vincent argued that more than 400 years earlier, Calvin had attacked prevailing 'Aristotelian' definitions of the sacraments for being falsely based on 'ontological' and 'predicative' assumptions about linguistic meaning (1979: 146). In this sense, Austin's theory could, he claimed, 'provide a suitable *metalanguage* for major elements in Calvin's discourse' (1979: 149). Hence, instead of a 'metaphysic of substance and accident' which attributed an 'occult power' to the Word of God in worship, Vincent cast Calvin as having presented the 'various linguistic phenomena' of sacramental discourse as phenomena of performative *action* and *institutionalization* which must 'penetrate into the heart of mankind' and there be felicitously 'acknowledged' in 'faith' (1979: 153). After Ladrière, Vincent represents the most significant reference-point for the 'pragmatic doxology' which we ourselves are seeking to define; as such, we shall return to his proposals with more *doctrinal* thoroughness at 3.3.

Although both Thiselton and Vincent produced brief taxonomies of liturgical speech acts by superimposing speech act frameworks on a small number of intuitive examples, more 'purpose-built' models of liturgical speech action have latterly been proposed in James H. Ware's *Not With Words of Wisdom* and in Terrence Tilley's *The Evils of Theodicy* (1991: 1-82). Indeed, Ware and Tilley can justly claim to have made by far the most detailed studies of liturgical pragmatics hitherto undertaken by either theologians or linguists.

The first part of Ware's study was largely historical and philosophical and doctrinal. Essentially, Ware followed Bouyer in arguing that Christian liturgy in the West has been understood too much according to a 'representational' view of linguistic meaning, and not enough according to a 'rhetorical' or 'performative' paradigm (1981: 1-17). Taking Austin and Searle as his starting-points, and drawing on his knowledge of Presbyterian worship, Ware re-stated Mananzan's contention that a powerful and 'proper' appreciation of the nature and purpose of liturgical discourse could be derived from speech act theory (1981: 15-17). Unlike Thiselton, however, Ware attempted rather more than a grouping of sacral 'performatives' within given classes of illocutionary force. Instead, he constructed his own 'grammar of liturgical acts', ordered in relation to the distinctive 'overall goal' of 'participatory communion with God' (1981: 40). Within this grammar, Ware suggested that such acts would fall into four main classes. *Enabling Acts* like blessing and forgiving were cast as acts which in some way enhance the worshipper's self-esteem or 'ego-strength'; *Relating Acts* like confessing, ordaining

and interceding were seen by Ware as diversely 'establishing the status' of worshippers in some particular relation to God and each other; *Directing* acts like charging and teaching were thought of as instructional or in some way obligational; and *Exalting Acts* mediated the expression of a speaker's 'creativity' in regard to his or her 'ultimate concern' (1981: 40-6). These categorizations are helpful, but they derive largely from an intuitive, introspective reflection on the language of worship, rather than from the kind of liturgical 'performance data' which we have committed ourselves to here. In addition, while they go some way towards describing the main *effects* of sacral discourse, as a theologian Ware is less detailed on the *linguistic-pragmatic means by which* those effects are characteristically achieved. As if to confirm this, Ware's familiarity with the field of pragmatics itself seems to extend no further than the early work of Searle on speech act theory. All the same, there can be little doubt that as the first book-length version of 'liturgical pragmatics', and as a text which was prepared to argue a theological case from functional-linguistic analysis, *Not With Words of Wisdom* stands as a major landmark in the short and decidedly patchy history of our much under-defined subject. Latterly, Ware has turned his attentions to a 'performative' exposition of the texts and rituals of non-Christian religions (1993 cf. McDermott 1975). From our point of view however, it is disappointing that while he has engaged with a wide range of contemporary hermeneuts and literary theorists in this project, his awareness of linguistic pragmatics has hardly advanced from that displayed in his earlier work.

By contrast with Ware, Tilley (1991) has shown himself to be impressively conversant with the expansion and diversification of Austin and Searle's ideas which has taken place in the last two decades. Although his governing model was still speech act theory, Tilley's discussion took account of later revisions by Searle himself (1979a, 1983; Searle & Vanderveken 1985), as well as by others like Bach & Harnish (1979), Habermas (1979) and Fish (1980). He also engaged with the work of Evans (1963) and Smith & McLendon discussed above. Whereas previous theological assessments of liturgical language had tended either to ignore the 'institutional' basis of liturgy or to conceptualize it as a 'felicity condition' without analysing its actual effects on linguistic meaning, Tilley highlighted it as the distinctive criterion of religious speech act definition. Specifically, he extrapolated from Habermas a division between sacred speech acts which are 'institutionally bound' and those which are 'institutionally free'. 'Institutionally bound' speech acts were defined by Tilley as those 'which only a person having a requisite status or role in a religious institution can perform successfully'. By contrast, 'institutionally free' speech acts could 'be performed without regard to the person's institutional status or role' (1991: 33). This distinction was crucial, for Tilley went on to argue that 'other than speech acts bound to religious institutions (eg. baptism), there are no 'religious' speech acts to be distinguished from 'secular' ones' (26). Whereas Evans had focussed on examples from language about God and creation, Tilley's concerns were theodicial - that is, centred on language about 'God and evils'. His aim was to show that the relative 'sacredness' or 'profanity' of an utterance resided

not in its *propositional* content, but rather in its role as 'a constituent in a communicative action' (4). Where the institution of the church has heavily 'predetermined' the illocutionary force of religious speech acts, the 'communicative action' of which they form part will be consistently 'sacred'; but where there is less institutional boundedness (eg. in petitionary prayer, preaching and swearing), the same speech act may mediate either religious *or* irreligious - and even wicked - intent (4). Thus, as Thiselton had insisted in his work on Hebrew promises and curses, the religious effect of such speech acts is not inherently guaranteed: it is, rather, dependent on local contexts of intention, tradition and understanding. On a wider scale, Tilley's purpose came very close to Mananzan's in thus suggesting ways 'to resolve the incessant debates over the question of whether religious language is "cognitive"' (34). In fact, argued Tilley, 'language used in religious contexts is no more and no less "cognitive" than language used in other contexts...The real questions concern the warrants for the presuppositions, assumptions and claims people make when speaking in religious contexts' (34).

Given the thrust of Tilley's argument, it is hardly surprising that not all of his examples were strictly 'liturgical'. Nevertheless, many were - and in any case, the argument itself is clearly germane to our own concerns. As such, we shall have cause to cite and critique it at various points in our practical data-analysis throughout Part II.

It should be apparent by now that although theologians and philosophers have often been ready to apply and adapt speech act theory to religious and liturgical

language, very few have engaged with other sub-disciplines of linguistic pragmatics. We have seen that Du Plessis and Thiselton were exceptional in appropriating Grice and Leech for Biblical interpretation, but our own investigation of theological and philosophical sources has found only one writer who has dealt seriously with implicature in relation to *liturgy*. Through two linked articles (1985, 1990), the Warwick philosopher Martin Warner suggested that both Gricean pragmatics, and its later transmutation into Relevance Theory, could provide useful insights into the reform of liturgy, since both recognised that changes in style, figuration and symbolic expression would entail changes of *meaning* rather than simply changes to the way 'meaning', defined in cognitive terms, was *conveyed* (1985: 164, 1990: 158-60). Interestingly, Warner thereby set himself against the majority of liturgists, whom he accused of having fallen prey to 'the perennial attraction of the attempt to separate style from meaning' (1990: 158). Warner's approach was thus provocative and very much alive to the wider *ecclesiological* and *theological* consequences of viewing sacral language through linguistic-pragmatic eyes. Of particular moment for our theoretical doxological interests is his concluding argument that the statements of formal doctrine should not be equated with the discourses of worship, and that the former can only acquire the 'linguistic force to make them live imaginatively and transformingly in the minds of [contemporary] worshippers' from the linguistic 'context' of the latter (1990: 172). Warner's work is important because though suggestive rather than exhaustive, it hints at just how radical a 'pragmatics of liturgy' could be for the *theology* of



worship, over and above its contribution to pure linguistic description. On this basis, its ideas very much bear the sort of practical testing which we have proposed.

#### 2.4.5 Religious and liturgical language-study in linguistics

If the use of linguistic pragmatics has been limited and sporadic in the work done by theologians and philosophers on sacral discourse, the inclination of modern *linguistic* specialists to deal in any way with the language of religion has been even less apparent. This point has been confirmed by the Stanford sociolinguist Charles Ferguson (1985: 208), who has maintained nonetheless that 'the study of religious discourse...is likely to teach us something about how a language works and might even teach us something about the nature of religious knowledge and religious behaviour'.

One professional linguist who *has* consistently realised Ferguson's point, and who has already provided us with the basic schema for our research here, is David Crystal. We showed above how liturgists like Westlake, Stevick, Chapman and Frost turned to linguistics for insights into the vexed issue of liturgical modernisation. Crystal's preoccupation with religious language emerged in the same context, but reached published form even earlier, during and immediately after the Second Vatican Council. In a 1964 article for *New Blackfriars*, Crystal stressed that 'ultimately' language in general, and religious language in particular,

must be studied 'in relation to the social context in which it is found' (1964: 149). Recognising liturgy as a very 'specialized and intense communicative activity', he proposed that it would be marked by certain features of 'style' and 'register'. Crystal divided the most 'distinctive' of these features into three main groups: 'archaisms, specialized vocabulary and formulaic diction' (1964: 151). Anticipating Warner, he went on to advise that reform in these areas would have to take note not only of semantic 'equivalence', but also of the fact that established sacred expressions can carry a 'long association suggestive of permanence, respect and mystery'. Thus, he added, it was 'essential to have an adequate understanding of the full *scope* and *function* of a term in religious language before one suggests leaving it out of future usage', while at the same time appreciating 'the popular as well as technical meanings of any term one tries to introduce, to avoid misunderstandings and unwanted overtones' (1964: 155-6). If the 'pragmatic' implications of all this are clear, Crystal more explicitly recognised the contribution which pragmatic approaches could make to religious language study in his subsequent book *Linguistics, Language and Religion* (1965: 93ff.). Admittedly, 'contemporary linguistic pragmatics' as we have defined it was then very much in embryo, and Crystal's discussion was informed by the more generally semiotic accounts of pragmatics offered by Peirce, Morris *et al.* What is more, his purposes were very wide-ranging: half the text is a straight summary of linguistic history and much of the rest is addressed to the sort of 'reference questions' about God-talk then being tackled by the philosophers and theologians we reviewed in 2.4.1 above (1965:

133-48, 157-89). Having said all this, Crystal's short chapter on 'Language and the Liturgy' (1965: 149-56) represents a landmark in the 'pre-history' of liturgical pragmatics. Reiterating the points made in his *New Blackfriars* paper, Crystal further explored the consequences of viewing liturgy as 'a set of procedures given formal realization by the church for promoting reciprocal communication between the individual and God [and involving] both conventional and symbolic activity' (1965: 150). One outcome of such an approach, for Crystal, was seen to be the recognition of liturgy's 'special "marked" style' - a style which should be expounded and reviewed only by bearing in mind 'the total relevant liturgical, doctrinal and cultural implications' (1965: 151).

These insights on the 'distinctive variety' and 'genre' of liturgical discourse resurfaced four years later in Crystal's collaboration with Derek Davy, *Investigating English Style* (1969: 147-72). On this occasion, though, analysis of the constituent features of 'religious English' was expanded to include phonology, grammar and morphology. What is more, it was directed towards actual texts - in this case Wright's *English Bible*, the BCP and the English version of the Catholic Mass. Along with the work of Brook (1965) and Frost (1974) on the development of lexis and syntax in Anglican rites, Crystal & Davy's study contained several implicitly 'pragmalinguistic' insights: certainly, it was aware not only of how *historical* religious contexts are mirrored in sacred speech, but also of how contemporary contexts and 'speech communities' bear on ecclesial discourse (1969: 147). For all this, the insights in question considerably pre-date 'mature' pragmatics, while even

Austin's work fails to merit a mention. Similarly useful but peripheral to pragmatics *as such* was Crystal's 1976 paper on 'Non-segmental phonology in religious modalities'. Although this paper seminally defined the methodological-theoretical-empirical approach to religious discourse which we are pursuing, it must be acknowledged that in itself, phonological investigation has played little or no part in the development of modern linguistic pragmatics (Levinson 1983: 374). Without doubt, Crystal's analysis of pitch, speed, amplitude, rhythm and stress in church service utterance revealed several distinctively 'liturgical' features of language-use, and we would be quick to agree that a full-blown pragmatics of liturgy would eventually have to take account of prosodic as well as of purely verbal functions. Nonetheless, insofar as our work in this project is based on 'mainstream' definitions of linguistic pragmatics, we shall touch on prosody only when it seems especially pertinent to more orthodox pragmatic concerns (eg. in regard to turn-demarcation at 4.3.3.3).

More directly relevant to our purposes is Crystal's contribution to Jasper & Jasper's aforementioned 'textbook' on sacral language (Crystal 1990). With its more recent provenance, this paper was able to acknowledge a 'revolution' in linguistics since the '60's - a revolution generated by 'the investigation of the way language was being *used* in the various contexts of daily life' (1990: 120-1). Although Crystal cast this revolution generally in terms of 'sociolinguistics' rather than specifically in terms of 'pragmatics', the revision of his earlier analyses of liturgical language from the '60's was strongly informed by linguistic-pragmatic insights.

Indeed, he went so far as to re-classify such language from a clearly 'functional' perspective, and included both 'Expressive' and 'Performative' operations in a framework which otherwise identified sacral discourse as being variously 'Informative', 'Identifying', 'Historical', 'Aesthetic', 'Heuristic' and 'Social'. Once again, Crystal's analysis benefited by reference to actual texts from the Mass and the BCP. As such, it stands alongside the work of Ware (1981) in its attempt to adapt existing pragmatic taxonomies to the special features of observed liturgical language.

Where Crystal incorporated speech act notions into a more broadly pragmatic model, a small number of linguists had previously essayed more classical Austinian and Searlian analyses of liturgical language. A.P. Martinich's (1975a, b) 'speech act' exposition of the Catholic sacraments comprised an impressive marriage of doctrinal reflection with close linguistic scrutiny - one which categorised the sacraments according to specially-formulated versions of Searle's 'conditions of use'. Martinich was also prescient in recognising that in liturgy, *several* speech acts may be clustered together within whole discoursal activities - a point we ourselves shall develop further in Chapter 7.

Similarly, perceiving the applicability of speech act conceptions to religious language, Phillip Ravenhill (1976) demonstrated their particular capacity to illuminate invocation, exorcism and consecration. He also crucially recognised that far from being monosemic, such sacred speech acts are often consciously 'multivalent' - that is, developed specifically to mediate a plurality of meanings for

a diversely-constituted assembly. This insight is worthy of considerable elaboration, and will thus occupy our attention further at 5.5.2 and 7.5.4.

Ravenhill's article actually stands alongside Crystal's 'phonology of worship' in a collection edited by William Samarin under the title *Language in Religious Practice* (1976a). Much of the material in this volume was culled from a session on 'Sociolinguistics and Religion' organised for the Annual Linguistic Round Table at Georgetown University (Washington DC) in 1972, and in his introduction (1976: 5) Samarin confirmed that the main aim was in fact ethnographic rather than pragmatic. Indeed, he cited as background for the work he had included earlier 'field' studies like those carried out by Kenneth Pike on Free Church Evangelical worship ([1954-60] 1967), by Bruce A. Rosenberg on American folk preaching (1970a, b), by Irving Zaretsky on Californian Spiritualism (1970, 1972), by Benetta Jules-Rosette on the Apostolic Church of John Marangue (1973), and by various anthropologists on the phenomenon of glossolalia (Goodman 1969; Hine 1969; Samarin 1969, 1972a, 1972b). While Ferguson submitted an exemplary analysis of 'The Collect as a Form of Discourse' and Long a similar treatment of 'priestly enquiry to God' in the Old Testament, several other articles included by Samarin (eg. by Shelton, Christian and Rabin) afforded a more broadly anthropological view of various non-Christian rites and ceremonies. Samarin was very clear that the dominant approach was thus empirical, inductive and observational rather than 'philosophical', and while this emphasis in one sense served as an antidote to 'the scores of books on...God Talk' in 'contemporary theological discussion' (1976a: 5),

it consciously avoided making links with the deeper questions of doxology which we have set ourselves to address here.

As it is, the two decades since Samarin's book was published have seen a blossoming of religious ritual study within the ethnography of communication - to the extent, in fact, that both Ferguson (1985) and Kelleher (1993) have presented this discipline as providing the most clearly appropriate 'hermeneutic' of liturgical performance. While, once again, most of this work has focussed on exotic religious traditions (Fitzgerald 1975; Loveday 1981; McDowell 1983), worthy applications of it to Christian ritual discourse have been undertaken by Gülich (1980), Enninger & Raith (1982), Fenn (1982) and Wonnenberger (1984). Like Tilley (1991), Gülich was concerned to analyse the extent to which the 'conventions and rules of [an] institution' are 'binding' on its speech activity (1980: 419). In contrast to Tilley, however, her methods were strongly data-driven and empirical, being suggested by a comparison between tape-recorded discourse drawn from academic congresses, legal trials and telephone counselling sessions, as well as from German Protestant church services. Like Fenn, who also compared the discourse of court trials and academic meetings with the discourse of religious testimony, Gülich concluded that the *extent* of 'institutionalisation' varied in each case, but with trials and liturgies exhibiting it at the most generally intense level. Indeed for Fenn, the fact that these two procedures appeared to represent 'secular' and 'sacred' sides of the same coin suggested a further, speech act based comparison of them in terms of their relative 'literalness' and 'eventfulness' (1982: 78ff.). Provocatively, Fenn then suggested that

the process of 'secularization' was epitomised by legal attempts to 'literalize' the sacrally 'eventful' testimonies of priests and other believers when transposing them to a courtroom setting.

Less polemical but far more minute in detail, Enninger & Raith's ethnography of communication survey of the Old Order Amish church service (1982) is a veritable model of its kind. Beginning with the assumption that this service is 'an...ideal-typical case of communication in institutionalized contexts' (1982: 1), Enninger & Raith examined its various 'channels of communication' in exhaustive detail. We have already made it clear that such an approach extends much further into general semiotics than a dedicated pragmatics of liturgical *discourse* could expect to go: indeed, what Enninger & Raith gain in ethnographic comprehensiveness we hope to gain in linguistic specificity. In this sense, the approach we have been defining for ourselves will more closely resemble that adopted not only by Gülich but also by Wonneberger (1984), for whom the general workings of the church body were to be taken very seriously, but who nonetheless related them very particularly to the phenomenon of language - in his case, the language of blessing. Comparably sociological-but-discourse-specific studies may be found in the more specialized work of Coleman (1980) on the in-group speech of American 'Born Again' Christianity, and of Bauman (1974) and Davies (1988) on 'ministry' in Quaker meetings.



## 2.5 Confirming key needs: the refinement, synthesis and extension of liturgical-pragmatic method

What emerges from this unavoidably protean reconnaissance of explorations along the liturgy-pragmatics interface is that the three strands of our designated 'analytical thread' have remained largely unplaited. This is to say, the *'theoretical'* work of theologians and philosophers on sacral discourse has rarely sought *methodological* consolidation from the work of pragmaticians on language use in general, while both groups still have much to gain from the *empirical* techniques developed by ethnographers of communication. A key claim to the originality of this study is that it seeks a genuine rapprochement between these hitherto largely discrete areas of liturgical discourse investigation.

In addition, it has become clear that both broadly linguistic and specifically linguistic-pragmatic studies of liturgy have focussed on Anglican and Roman rites, and have virtually ignored worship in the Reformed tradition. Thus Brook (1965), Westlake (1969), Stevick (1970), Chapman (1973), Thiselton ([1975] 1986) and Warner (1985, 1990) alike drew most of their illustrative material from the BCP, while Crystal (1964, 1965, 1976, 1990), Gelineau (1971), Mananzan (1974), Martinich (1975a, b), Ramshaw (1986, 1988) and Tilley (1991) concentrated more particularly on Catholic liturgy. Furthermore, even where sociolinguists and ethnographers of communication have explored other forms of worship, these have tended to lie on the margins of traditional Christian practice, rather than in that mainstream of which the Reformed church constitutes a significant part (cf.

Zaretsky: 1970, 1972; Rosenberg 1970a, b; Samarin 1972a; Enninger & Raith 1982)). Indeed, of those we *have* mentioned, only Vincent (1979) and Ware (1981) have engaged directly with Reformed liturgy - and we have already made it clear that their analyses were limited by having relied on speech act theory alone.

In the next two Chapters, we shall supplement the methodological foundations laid here, with more detailed definitions of the theoretical and empirical substance of our project. As we do so, we shall sharpen our focus on Reformed liturgy and demonstrate how its English manifestation represents a suggestive root paradigm of Christian language in sacral practice.

## CHAPTER 3

### PRAGMATICS AND DOXOLOGY: THEORIES OF LANGUAGE-USE AND THEOLOGIES OF WORSHIP

#### 3.1 Doxology and pragmatic theory

We established in 1.3 that the *theoretical* strand of our investigation would specifically relate the conceptual frameworks of linguistic-pragmatics to 'doxology'. As we pursue this relation, it will be helpful to define the latter term more closely.

Although 'a doxology' has traditionally denoted an ascription of praise containing some reference to God's δόξα or 'glory', (Grisbrooke 1986: 214), the more 'gerundive' use of 'doxology' to describe a sphere of liturgical *study* has had a much more recent history. In 1980, the Methodist scholar Geoffrey Wainwright adopted it as the title of his seminal 'systematic theology' - a systematic theology distinguished, in his own words, by being written 'from a liturgical perspective'. 'Doxology' for Wainwright was thus to be seen as a 'liturgical way of doing theology' which could 'also be considered as a theology of worship' (1980: Preface). Refining approaches suggested in his earlier work *Eucharist and Eschatology* (1971), Wainwright began from the premise that 'relations between doctrine and worship are deeper rooted and further reaching than many theologians and liturgists have appeared to recognise in their writings' (1980: Preface). In addition, he noted that although his own text had been preceded by 'a growing

awareness' of these relations, earlier writers from Bouyer (1963) and von Allmen (1965) to Schmemann (1966), Crichton (1973) and Leenhardt (1971) 'had usually stopped short after a paragraph or two on the subject' (Preface).

Against this background, Wainwright's *Doxology* presents itself as the first 'complete systematic theology deliberately composed with these links [between doctrine and worship] in mind' (Preface). Crucially, Wainwright sets such links in the context of the key ancient Eastern formula *lex orandi, lex credendi* - 'the law (or word) of prayer - the law (or word) of faith' (218ff.). This 'Latin tag' is significant for Wainwright, not least because it 'may be construed in two ways':

The more usual way makes the rule of prayer a norm for belief: what is prayed indicates what may and must be believed. But from the grammatical point of view it is equally possible to reverse subject and predicate and so take the tag as meaning that the rule of faith is the norm for prayer: what must be believed governs what may and should be prayed. The linguistic ambiguity of the Latin tag corresponds to a *material interplay* which in fact takes place between worship and doctrine in Christian *practice*: worship influences doctrine, and doctrine worship. (1980: 218, my emphasis).

Elsewhere, Wainwright talks of this worship-doctrine relationship in similar terms as 'dialectical' and 'bi-directional'. Indeed, he insists that the 'integrity' of Christian reflection 'requires a movement between the two' (1980: 56). Casting worship as the most potent instantiation of 'faith', Wainwright echoes Zurdeeg (1958), Ferré (1962) and Knox (1964) in arguing for a 'convictional' view of truth, while also reflecting Wilson's (1958: 16-31) stress on the church-at-prayer as the definitive arena of theological 'verification'. Thus not only is the 'intellect' of the

theologian 'at the service of his existential vision and commitment'; this vision and commitment are in turn properly honed in the communal action of the liturgy. For Wainwright, 'worship is the place in which [theological] vision comes to a sharp focus, a concentrated expression, and it is here that the vision has often been found to be at its most appealing'. We are left in no doubt, then, that 'the theologian's thinking therefore properly draws on the worship of the Christian community and is duty bound to contribute to it' (3).

For our part, it should by now be apparent that we share Wainwright's commitment to the integrity of liturgical practice and doctrinal formulation. Indeed, this may be seen as the *major theological aspect of our consciously seeking to mesh methodological, theoretical and empirical analyses within a coherent liturgical-pragmatic framework*. For all this, however, the Roman Catholic liturgist David N. Fageberg (1992) has still criticised the finer points of Wainwright's approach in terms which bear importantly on the exact way in which we ourselves might *construct* this framework. Specifically, Fageberg argues that despite being written 'from faith to faith', Wainwright's new programme for theology is still predicated on a *dichotomy* between liturgy and doctrine, which assumes that the latter will be conceived by the specialist in 'the academy' while the former is practised by ordinary congregations which, though they might *include* the theologian, will enjoy no necessarily reciprocal involvement in academia. Hence, Fageberg charges that in Wainwright's doxology 'doctrines are quarried from worship practises, and any stones which the theologian reckons unsuitable are discarded. The raw material is

sculpted by chisels honed in the academy, and the blocks are returned to the academy through its leaders in order to build an edifice of worship measured along an ideological plumb line' (1992: 133).

In contrast to this, Fageberg contends that liturgy *per se* should be viewed as an intrinsically and truly 'theological act' - one in which 'the *lex credendi* comes from the community itself' (1992: 135). As he goes on to add, 'theologians are not the only academics; the liturgical assembly itself is a theological corporation' (1992: 135). On these grounds, Fageberg follows Aidan Kavanagh (1984: 73-95) in calling for a 'liturgical theology' distinguished from Wainwright's 'theology of worship' - one which consciously eschews 'a reductionism which supposes that liturgy creates feelings which in turn influence the thinker', and which maintains instead that 'liturgy does more than (even if not less than) create feelings' (1992: 136; cf. Empereur 1987: 70).

Now although this critique and proposal are very germane to our concerns, we do not take Fageberg's distinction between 'liturgical theology' and the 'theology of worship' to invalidate the term 'doxology' as such. As Empereur has noted (1987: 7), precise terminologies have yet to be settled within a subject-area that is barely a decade into its development. Certainly, the Reformed liturgist Hughes Oliphant Old (1992: 1-2) recognises the actual term 'doxology' as one which could justly commend itself to 'liturgical theology' in Kavanagh and Fageberg's sense, as well as to Wainwright's somewhat 'simpler' and more 'bifurcated' coinage of it in relation to 'the theology of worship' (cf. Fageberg 1992: 135). Indeed, although there can be

little doubt that Wainwright's conceptualization of the role of the church in doxological formation *is* stereotypically 'pastoral' and insufficiently 'systematic' (cf. 1980: 118–48). Old is right to emphasise the more fundamental point that he does at least seek 'very clearly' to relate 'Christian worship, Christian thought and Christian action' (1992: 20). The specific fact that such 'thought' and 'action' are rather too sharply divided between 'the academy' and 'the assembly' should not detract from the more general point that *as a whole* Wainwright's doxology *does* seek to be 'both systematic and pastoral' - something which Empereur himself cites as a defining criterion of 'liturgical theology' (1987: 7).

Having said all this, even while we shall thus retain 'doxology' as a broad description of liturgical-theological intercourse, we cannot ignore Fageberg's more specific critique of Wainwright's analytical programme. The reasons for this will become clear as we move on next to consider the relation of doxology to liturgical *language*.

### 3.2 Language-use as an issue in contemporary liturgical theology

Like his great Anglican forbear Gregory Dix (1945: 12–13), Wainwright is very aware that liturgy should be viewed as 'doing' rather than just 'saying'. Indeed, while Dix's having pre-dated Ordinary Language Philosophy meant that he made this point more by separating 'action' from 'speaking' than by

seeing them as fundamentally linked, Wainwright commends various more explicitly 'performative' models of language as a means to helping us 'understand the meaning of communion between humanity and God' (1980: 18-20). The basis for using such models in doxology, says Wainwright, lies in the biblical conception of 'the Word' in relation to human life and behaviour:

The Greeks used *logos* for both thought (*logos endiathetos*) and speech (*logos prophorikos*). The Hebrews took the potential for exteriorization even further: *dabar* could mean also thing, action, event. An important patristic interpretation identified the divine image in humanity with *logos*: God also had *logos*; indeed, he was the source of *logos* in human beings. In both God and humans, *logos* is performative: it expresses being and engages the person. It is the basis for communication and therefore the means of communication. (1980: 18).

Although we again take Barr's point (1962: 107-60) that derivations of modern doctrine from etymology are to be treated with caution, the historic interrelation between Scripture and liturgy makes Wainwright's suggestion of a 'performative language doxology' very persuasive. This feeling is reinforced by the fact that his exposition of this idea claims precedents in a number of the works cited by us in the last Chapter - ie. from Crystal (1965), Schmidt (1971), Thiselton ([1975] 1986) - and most notably in this connection, Ladriere (1973) (Wainwright 1980: 19n26 (p.467)). Emphasising that 'theologians may draw insight from [linguistics, philosophy and social anthropology] which will help them to appreciate the functions of language in worship', Wainwright co-opts three major paradigms from these fields into his own programme. These are, respectively, Lyons' 'universe of discourse' (1977: 657ff.), Wittgenstein's 'language-game' (1958) and F.J.



Leenhardt's 'langage gestuel' (1971). The *universe of discourse* constituted in and through liturgy, says Wainwright, derives from the fact that 'Christian worshippers share with one another *and with God* a common history focussed in Jesus Christ and a common interest in the continuing battle of grace against sin' (1980: 19). Just as this 'common interest' and 'common history' is 'graciously set up' by God Himself, so it 'comes to expression' in a language of worship which is at once 'given and received' in sacral 'exchange' (20).

Similarly, insofar as liturgy is a *language-game* ordered according to very distinctive 'rules, techniques and aims', Wainwright proposes that 'in Christian worship, we are not playing the game of scientific description or of everyday social exchange, nor even the game of theological discourse, but we are playing rather the game of the community's conversation with the God who is the creator and redeemer'. Furthermore, 'the present delight and permanent "point" of the game lie in a growing communion of human beings with God' (20).

Thirdly, liturgical language is *performative* for Wainwright in the sense that its typical 'framework of understanding' is one in which 'action is accompanied by verbal interpretation' (20) - whether in the general Hebrew sense of 'dabar', in the use of gestures, actions and objects as 'communicative signs', or in fully-realised systems of 'sacraments and sacramentals' (20).

Now as far as they go, these doxological deductions from pragmatic theory very much coincide with those implications of a pragmatic approach to liturgical study which we have charted in the work of philosophers, theologians and linguists.

Nevertheless, Fageberg (1992: 139) is justified in questioning whether Wainwright's 'pragmatics of liturgical language' in fact goes far *enough*. Possibly because he acquired it 'second hand' through theological filters rather than from its original linguistic sources, Wainwright's pragmatic model of liturgy seems not quite reconciled with the radical extent to which Austinian and post-Austinian theory has collapsed traditional dichotomies between 'cognitive' and 'non-cognitive' meaning, between 'propositions' and 'speech acts', between 'truth' and 'felicity' - and more particularly, between 'theological' and 'liturgical' discourse. Indeed, Wainwright maintains his aforementioned division between 'the academy' and 'the assembly' in this regard when he writes as follows:

...communion with God, symbolically focused in the liturgy, is the primary locus of religious language for the Christian. *Theological* language belongs to the second order: it is the language of reflexion upon the primary experience. The language of worship mediates the substance on which theologians reflect; without that substance, theological talk would have no referent. Yet the 'architectonic' and 'critical' functions of theological reasoning, secondary though that reasoning is in relation to substantial communion with God, play a proper part in shaping and pruning the continuing primary experience. For *reflective* reason is part of God's endowment to humanity and must therefore be included in the total picture of human communion with God. The second-order activity of theology is therefore at its own level, properly doxological: the theologian is truly theologian when, in his very theologizing, he is listening for the 'echo of a voice' and is contributing, even indirectly, to the human praise of God. It is indeed a traditional dictum of Eastern Christianity that the true theologian is the person who prays. (1980: 21).

Although there is no doubt that Wainwright here moves towards a genuinely holistic rapprochement between 'theological' and 'liturgical' discourse, the fact remains that he still links the former primarily to 'reason' and 'thought', while associating the latter archetypally with 'action'. In this sense, he upholds the classic

Chomskyan distinction between 'competence' and 'performance', while failing to realise what we stressed in 2.2.3 - namely that the 'pragmatics' he so warmly commends has itself fundamentally *revised* this distinction. For Wainwright, 'speech' is still something 'which allows precision in the *expression of intention*' (1980: 20, my emphases), and the same mind/behaviour split informs his conviction that the 'shared world' of God and humanity '*comes to expression* in the language of worship' (1980: 19-20, my emphasis).

This underlying philosophical dualism sits rather uneasily with the linguistic-pragmatic *methodologies* co-opted by Wainwright for the prosecution of his doxology. As Fageberg points out,

We suppose that what Wainwright wants to call 'a liturgical way of doing theology' is exactly a theology which is grounded in liturgical illocutionary speech. However, he remains hobbled by the description of worship as an "expression" of the Christian vision. It sounds as though the Christian vision precedes its expression and this is why the vision can also be expressed doctrinally in a way which will then control the *lex orandi* (1992: 139)

Subsequent to Wainwright, Kavanagh (1984), David Power (1984) and Theodore Jennings (1985) have all attempted to refine the concept of worship as 'word-and-act' by closing the gap which Wainwright left between the two and thereby, between 'conceiving theology' and 'performing the liturgy'. Echoing Thiselton ([1975] 1986), Power argues that liturgy does much more than report extant 'states of mind' in language: rather, he contends that it both '*transforms*' and '*discloses*' in its own right. Worship is thus to be regarded as 'an act of God and the

church' (1984: 168); from our perspective it could therefore be said to be something whose truth and purpose are 'brought about' *in* and not just 'brought along' *to* the rite (cf. Auer 1992). Given this premiss, Power is consistent in pressing for a thoroughly 'sacramental' view of worship discourse - not only within the 'official' sacraments of the Catholic church analysed by Martinich (1975a, b), but also within its 'entire canon' of prayer, blessing etc. (168). What is more, rather than driving a wedge between Scriptural and liturgical language by, say, treating the former propositionally and the latter 'poetically', Power stresses the interdependence of each on the other in a superordinate economy of 'testimony'. Thus, rather than polarising Biblical and sacral discourse as respectively 'the Word written' and 'the Word performed', he sees *both* deriving from a 'total unity between event and meaning' - a unity which is the very essence of God's 'Word' to His church. Hence too, though like Wainwright Power accepts that 'quite a difference exists between teaching doctrines and invoking God' (1984: 159), he diverges from Wainwright in arguing that the 'ritualization' and 'theologization' of the λόγος are themselves equally attributable to testimonial 'acts' of the Creator (168). On much the same basis, Jennings moves from a position which affirms liturgy as 'supplementing' and 'correcting' prior first-order dogmas (1985: 187), to one which repudiates an 'artificial abstraction of doxological from kerygmatic [that is, declamatory or credal] language' (1985: 199).

Where Power's and Jennings' approaches to *lex orandi*, *lex credendi* are more

radical than Wainwright's, Kavanagh's is *explicitly* so. Indeed, Kavanagh goes so far as to upend Wainwright's blueprint for 'a liturgical way of doing theology':

Wainwright makes the reasoning of theologians architectonic and "critical" with respect to liturgy. This move enables him then to claim a special doxological quality for the second order activity of theology at its own level. Wainwright thinks this is what Eastern Christianity means when it says that the true theologian is the person who prays. But the dictum, so far from endowing a doxological quality upon the second-order activity of theology, in fact confers a theological quality upon the first-order activity of people at worship. (1984: 124, cf. Jennings 1985: 201)

Pertinently for us, Kavanagh proceeds to argue that the effect of doctrine upon liturgy is 'like the effect of philology upon language' - that is, 'a truth but not the whole truth' (1984: 84). To it must be added an understanding which recognises that '*language is correlative with society as liturgy is correlative with Church*' (1984: 84-5, my emphasis). In each, 'language and liturgy are both constitutive of and constituted as enterprises of the first order'. (1984: 85). Though like Power Kavanagh appears to be unfamiliar with contemporary pragmatics, he evokes core pragmatic principles when he posits that liturgiology must involve more than a search for what any given liturgical act 'means', and must go on rather to ask 'how liturgy 'works' in and from its ecclesial context' (1984: 87). Having done this, Kavanagh suggests that the liturgical-language analyst will be compelled to the conclusion that 'a liturgical act *is* a theological act of the most all-encompassing, integral, and foundational kind' (1984: 89). Moreover, s/he will realise that this same 'liturgical act' is 'both precipitator and result of that adjustment to the change

wrought in the worshipping assembly by its encounter in faith with its divine source' (1984: 89).

Now with their various emphases on worship as 'action' and 'theology in the making', the newer Catholic doxologies of Power, Jennings, and Kavanagh can be seen as very compatible with a 'pragmatic' reading of liturgical discourse. Given this, it is all the more surprising that none of them acknowledge the work of Jean Ladrière, who not only anticipates their thinking by more than a decade, but who does so with direct and profound reference to linguistic pragmatics. It is to Ladrière's seriously neglected work that we must now give special attention, the better to appreciate just *how* the theory and practice of pragmatics might inform the construction of doxology.

### 3.3. Jean Ladrière and the 'performativity' of liturgical language

Though he does so only in a footnote, it is rather ironic that Wainwright acknowledges Jean Ladrière as a significant writer on liturgical language (1980: 19n26 (p.467)), where Power, Kavanagh and Jennings seem to have ignored him altogether. Certainly, Ladrière's work on sacral discourse accords more closely with the recent views of his fellow Roman Catholics on theology being brought about *in* worship, than with the Protestant Wainwright's earlier model of theology being brought along *to* worship as a set of 'thoughts' from the

academy which then undergo 'expression' in the rite. As it is, Ladrière's short 1973 article for *Concilium*, entitled 'The Performativity of Liturgical Language' lit the touch paper for our own study. Since first encountering it, we have become increasingly convinced that it sounds the keynote for 'liturgical pragmatics' - even while realising that it needs to be much expanded, updated and revised in the light of later developments within pragmatics *per se*, and that it is a consciously theoretical treatise which warrants not only empirical testing, but also exposition from a more Protestant perspective.

Since we embarked on our research in 1989, the Lutheran-turned-Catholic Fageberg (1992: 136-42) has published a brief précis of Ladrière's *Concilium* paper and has justifiably placed it on a continuum both with Schmemann's earlier Eastern Orthodox account of *lex orandi, lex credendi* (1966), and with Kavanagh's subsequent preference for 'liturgical theology' over Wainwright's 'theology of worship'. Then again, Fageberg is not particularly concerned about the precise implications of Ladrière's argument, and while fairly summarising what Ladrière says about worship in general, he does not stop to consider just *how* or *why* this diverges so sharply from 'doxology' as it has been defined by churches and scholars who trace their origins to the Continental Reformation. In order to pursue these hitherto unexplored ramifications of Ladrière's work ourselves, we need to review it in some detail, paying special attention to the aforementioned *Concilium* paper.

Born in 1921, Fr. Jean Ladrière became Professor of the Philosophy of Science at the French-speaking University of Louvain-la-Neuve in Belgium in 1959. His interest in the relation of linguistic pragmatics to liturgy can be traced as far back as the mid-'60's, when he wrote two reviews of Evans' work on the logic of self-involvement (1966, 1967). The substance of these articles then reappeared in a major study of theological discourse, published in 1970 under the title *L'articulation du Sens: Discours Scientifique et Parole de la Foi*. Translated by Garrett Barden two years later as *Language and Belief*, this text set Evans' study in the wider history and context of semiotics, science and linguistic philosophy. Calling Evans' thesis 'a work of remarkable analytic skill', Ladrière saw it as facilitating 'a new and far more precise formulation of several traditional problems' (1972: 84, 91). Specifically, he suggested that Evans' appropriation of Austin's 'speech act' philosophy allowed for a valid presentation of religious language-meanings which went beyond 'purely informative' models based on reference and propositional logic (1972: 91). Rather, Ladrière inferred from Evans a 'circle' of sacred linguistic understanding in which that which was 'brought along' to religious discourse was not so much truth-conditional 'intention' in Wainwright's sense, as an 'affectively' and 'rapportively' nurtured 'faith'. While anticipating Kavanagh and Fageberg's insistence that 'faith' was something which worship *itself* engendered, Ladrière nonetheless maintained that 'to see Christ in the mystery of God, one must already possess a certain rapport with that mystery. One must *already* have been transformed by the divine action' (1972: 92, my emphasis).



From this perspective, 'faith' for Ladrière was not simply wilful and voluntaristic: it was to be viewed as a 'gift of God' (1972: 92; cf. Ephesians 2: 8) - one which 'creates in [humanity] a receptive field in which [the divine mystery] can be welcomed'. Even so, Ladrière insisted that the establishment of this receptivity 'presupposes its possibility, and this possibility has to be considered as a kind of predisposition, or presentiment, of waiting' (1972: 93). Thus, even if the proper interpretation of religious language might entail a 'bracketing' of its self-involving aspects, this could never become a 'suppression' of them (1972: 94); indeed, Ladrière pointed out that while it may not usually countenance Evans' placing of 'acknowledgement' within the realm of 'verification', philosophical discourse in general does frequently entail 'an aspect of decision and commitment' - and further still, may evince 'something...beyond empirical reality, beyond what is simply given, a revelatory breakthrough which, necessarily, is active and operative' (1972: 95).

By the time he wrote for *Concilium* in 1973, Ladrière had clearly grasped that it is in *worship* that these self-involving, rapportive and revelatory aspects of religious discourse are most intensely manifested. Certainly, while his earlier work had represented an attempt to reconcile established scientific method with theological interpretation, Ladrière makes it clear from the outset that liturgical language 'cannot be analysed in terms of information theory: it does not consist in the reporting of events, the description of objects, the formulation of theoretical hypotheses, the statement of experimental findings, or the handing on of data'

(1973: 51, 1.21-3). Rather, such language is to be 'characterized in that it is a certain form of action'. It thus 'puts something into practice; in short, it possesses an "operativity"'. It is not to be thought of as 'merely a verbal commentary on an action external to itself; in and of itself, it is action' (1973: 51, 1.21-3).

Given this starting-point, Ladrière rightly identifies his 'basic problem' as 'to discover how liturgical language *works*', and then to determine 'the *exact kind of* [operation] proper to liturgical language' (1973: 51, 1.15-16; 52, 1.52-3, my emphases). Initially, Ladrière approaches this problem in the same way as Evans had approached the problem of language about God as Creator. This is to say, he revives Austin's original distinction between 'constatives' and 'performatives'. Thus he proposes that 'in order...to express the operative (non-descriptive) nature of liturgical language, we may use the term "performativity"' (1973: 52, 1.49-52). However, Ladrière soon acknowledges that first Austin, and then Searle, collapsed this distinction into more nuanced models of 'illocutionary force' (53), and that the analysis of liturgical discourse should in fact be conducted within the wider sphere of 'pragmatics' - that is, within a realm where linguistic interpretation takes full account of 'users...speakers and those spoken to' (1973: 52, 1.66, 74). Indeed, this perception is made even more explicit by the reprint of Ladrière's article which appears in the second volume of *L'articulation du Sens*, published in 1984 as *Les Langages de la Foi* (55-65). Here, the text is set within a whole section on 'The Pragmatics of Christian Religious Language', a section which includes later work on 'gospel narrative', John Chapter 11, 'Spiritual language' and 'Ecclesial faith-

expression' - work which is informed by insights from post-Austinian pragmaticians like Montague (1984: 91n3) and Recanati (1984: 10n1).

Perspicuously given the way pragmatics has in fact developed since the early '70's, Ladrière maintains that the 'very complex' nature of liturgical language should no longer be understood in the sense of a 'general principle of operativity' (1973: 55, l.165-8). In effect, this means a thoroughly *discoursal* pragmatics along the lines we ourselves have been outlining: for Ladrière then, as for us now, 'every effort must be made to conceive liturgical language *as a whole*, or as the general context in which [liturgical] sentences function' (1973: 55, l.174-8, my emphasis). When thus considered, Ladrière seminally suggests that liturgical discourse will 'seem to possess a *threefold performativity*: that of an *existential induction*, that of an *institution*, and that of a *'presentification'*' (1973: 55, l.180-2, my emphasis).

*Existential induction* is a process similar in effect to Evans' 'self-involvement'. For Ladrière, it constitutes 'an operation by means of which an expressive form awakens in the person using it a certain affective disposition which opens up existence to a specific field of reality' (1973: 56, l.186-8). Such 'affectivity' is understood by Ladrière in 'a very basic sense'; it is not, he insists, 'a question of emotion, nor really of feeling, but of that form of constitutive reciprocity which makes us capable of adjusting to reality in its several manifestations: to the reality of salvation which comes to us from God by the mediation of Jesus Christ, who is announced in the texts of Scripture and is accomplished in the words of the Canon, and received in the words of the action of grace' (1973: 58, l.275-82). In particular,

the use of 'personal pronouns' by the assembly as a whole is seen to make such 'affective functioning' both possible in, and distinctive to, worship: when they are uttered by the congregation *en masse*, first person singular pronouns locate individual worshippers in a corporate 'discourse' which is simultaneously a 'concrete act' - something in which they 'take part' together with others (1973: 56-7, l.196ff.). Thus Ladrière's 'existentialism' is neither introspective nor solipsistic: rather, personal being is realised archetypally in the context of ecclesial praising. As Fageberg has noted (1992: 142), with Ladrière 'there is no pre-existent "I" which then has a body or is a body. Rather, "I am bodily". The community, which does primary theology, exists liturgically'. Moreover, this 'liturgical existence' mediates its unity in diversity: it is not merely articulated as a corporate monologue; it subsists in 'dialogic relationship' - something confirmed iconically by the liberal use of second person pronouns oriented to, and anticipating response from, 'another' - whether human or divine (1973: 57-8, l.221ff.).

According to Ladrière, the koinonial dimensions of liturgical discourse function not only to 'dispose souls to welcome that which [such discourse] suggests'; in addition, they serve to establish the church and its liturgy as an *institution*. Worship for Ladrière comprises a series of 'acts' whose coherence is more than simply 'arbitrary' or coincidental. Rather, inasmuch as participation in the liturgy means being 'inducted' into a community, it means simultaneously entering a language-game and form of life constituted by 'very exact rules' (1973:

58-9, 1.295-303). Indeed, one cannot in practice separate the church's 'community' from its 'rite': each owes its identity crucially to the other. Thus:

Language is not the expression of a community constituted before it and apart from it and is not the description of what such a community would be, but the location in which and the instrument by means of which the community is constituted. (1973: 59, 1.303-306).

For Fageberg, this statement represents the ultimate corrective to Wainwright's vision of prior 'theological concepts' regulating subsequent 'liturgical actions'. As he points out, Ladrière's understanding of sacral discourses is far more 'primary': 'for [Ladrière], liturgical illocutionary and symbolic acts *create* the community and *create* attitudes which come into effect when the liturgical rite is transacted. *The liturgy creates the attitudes (theological attitudes toward God, self and world), it does not merely give expression to them*' (1992: 139-40, my emphasis).

In particular, Ladrière sees these 'creative' forces of liturgical discourse belonging to a governing process of *presentification*. 'By all those acts which it effects', he contends, liturgical language 'makes present for the participants, not as a spectacle, but as a reality whose efficacy they take into their very own life, that about which it speaks and which it effects in diverse ways: the mystery of Christ, his life and death, and his resurrection: the revelation conveyed to us in him of the mystery of God: the accomplishment of the eternal plan by virtue of which we are called to become children of God, co-heirs of Christ in eternal life' (1973: 59-60, 1.332-41).

This vital 'making present' is achieved for Ladrière in three main ways. First, he proposes that it is accomplished by *repetition*. Repetition in the liturgical context means more than 'mere quotation'; it is, rather, 'the resumption into acts of today of words written or spoken at a given moment in the past' (1973: 60, l.348-50). In fact, Ladrière's original French term *reprise* in this sense better captures the thrust of his analysis, which envisages established canonical formulae being 'taken up' afresh by each contemporary assembly, and thus imbued with illocutionary force through the instantiation of liturgical discourse in particular ecclesial contexts.

The second way in which presentification occurs for Ladrière is through *proclamation*. Significantly from his Roman perspective, Ladrière sees this reaching its 'culmination' in the creed or 'confession of faith', rather than in the sermon. Like his fellow Catholic Mananzan (1974), Ladrière regards the enunciation of the creed in worship as providing a paradigmatic bridge between 'doctrinal' and 'doxological' (that is, attestational, ratificational and commitmental) speech. In this sense, he characterises it, almost paradoxically, as a set of 'propositional acts' - acts which 'bring into existence a form of discursive articulation in which the very content of the mystery [of salvation] becomes manifest' (1973: 60, l.364-71).

Ultimately, though, it is Ladrière's third dynamic of presentification - the dynamic of *sacramentality* - through which liturgical language is seen to have 'its most profoundly actualizing effect' (1973: 61, l.372-4). Sacramentality in this regard is a fundamentally *eschatological* phenomenon - one which links not only

the diachronic and synchronic dimensions of sacral discourse, but which also points towards what has yet to be fulfilled (1973: 61, l. 390ff.). Indeed, he goes so far as to emphasise that it is the 'registration' of liturgical language in this eschatological perspective which 'allows it its characteristic performativity' (1973: 61, l.399-400). Again showing his Catholic orientation, Ladrière claims that 'in repeating the words of the Last Supper, the celebrant does more than commemorate it'. Rather, he 'repeats once again that which Christ did, in giving again to the words which Christ used that efficacy which Christ gave them, *in conferring upon them again the power to do what they mean*' (1973: 61, l.373-78). What is proposed here, then, is not just 'repetition' or even 'reappropriation', but a 'real presence' *re-enactment* of gospel events. Admittedly, Ladrière begins by dubbing this re-enactment 'secondary' in terms of performativity, to the original 'institution' of sacred words and acts by Christ Himself (1973: 61, l.378-9). Nevertheless, he *goes on* to propose that by 're-effectuating' such words and acts in 'the context of the prayer of the Canon', a modern-day congregation can in fact *'restore them to their primary performativity'* (1973: 61, l.383-4, 386, my emphasis). Furthermore, while thus 'resuming' that 'which has already taken place', the same congregation also makes 'an announcement of that which is still awaited' (1973: 61, l.393-4).

Unfortunately, Ladrière does not support this grand 'liturgical discourse eschatology' with specific linguistic analysis - but he does commend such analysis to others (1973: 61, l.395-7). Indeed, he maintains that only *with* such evidence would it be possible to show 'in what way [liturgical language] really "makes

present" that which it talks of (1973: 61, l.397-9). It is our belief that 20 years on, Ladrière's gauntlet has yet to be satisfactorily picked up, and we see it as one of our key tasks here to do so. Moreover, it is a task which we shall approach from a Protestant Reformed viewpoint in the conviction that Ladrière's 'eschatological' hypothesis is far from axiomatic and thus needs to be tested against observed data rather than just illustrated by anecdotal introspection.

If Ladrière avoids the close linguistic exegesis to which we have committed ourselves, he does still address the problem of *how* liturgical 'performativity' and 'sacramentality' are brought about by, in and through the assembly itself - that is, how sacral discourse is 'made present' to 'users,...speakers and those spoken to' (1973: 52, l.66-74). As in his earlier work on the general features of religious language, he resolves this question in terms of *faith*. 'Faith' for Ladrière is that which supremely 'impels' liturgical language and 'endows it with performativity' (1973: 61, l.401-2). In contrast with Wainwright, and in anticipation of Kavanagh and Fageberg's more extensive treatment of this theme, he goes on to contend that this faith is not to be seen as some 'prior experience' generated in a context separate from and antecedent to the liturgy, which it is the function of liturgical language then to 'describe'; rather, 'between liturgical language and faith there is a kind of dual assumption'. According to Ladrière,

Faith takes up this language and gives it its own efficacy, inasmuch as faith is a resumption of the mystery of Christ, the acceptance of salvation and hope of benefits yet to come. Language is to faith a kind of structuring field which allows it to express itself in accordance with the reality to which it corresponds. The language is proclamation of the very content in which the faith is truly embodied, and is a sacramental accomplishment of the mystery which is thus announced and



witnessed. Its threefold performativity enables faith to be expressed. (1973: 61-2, 1.407-8).

If this on its own appears to imbue 'faith-driven' language with a quite extraordinary causality, Ladrière is quick to deny that this causality could be interpreted in a fideistic or 'occultic' sense - that is, as something generated by 'human believing' alone. On the contrary, 'faith' is itself to be understood as a product of divine grace - something, moreover, which is mediated specifically by God's eternal λόγος. Thus 'faith...is the hearing of the Word and the *effective action* of the Word in human life' (1973: 62, 1.418-20). Even further still,

If faith is the reception of the Word and if liturgical language receives from faith its characteristic performativity, that language is itself an echo of the Word. In the celebration it is the Word to which faith allows access that becomes present and operative in our own words. The word became flesh and dwelt among us. Insofar as in and by faith we become participants in the mystery of the incarnation, our speech acts, in the liturgy, become the present mainstay of the manifestation of the Word. (1973: 62, 1.423-32).

In its own right, Ladrière's argument here bears out impressively that 'circle' of sacred language comprehension which he himself had identified in *L'articulation du Sens* as a vital prerequisite of Christian theology. Liturgical self-involvement comes by faith, which is defined primarily as the 'hearing of the Word'; liturgy is the archetypal medium through which this Word is 'made present', but is at the same time constituted *by* the Word. Hence not only the Word itself, but faith and worship too, have their past, present and future source in God, who alone is 'prior

to' the discourse of praise.

Now all this sounds very close to the basic tenets of *Reformed* theology: the superintendence of the Word in worship; the emphasis on 'faith alone' as the operative fuel of liturgy; the stress on 'hearing' as constitutive of 'believing' and 'participating' in the church community - all these are axiomatic in Reformed doxologies from Calvin ([1559] 1960) through Barth ([1936] 1975: 88-111) to von Allmen (1965) and Old (1992). Nonetheless, as we have already hinted, the *detail* of Ladrière's argument might be more readily *contrasted* with Reformed understanding, and it seems likely that it will be such differences of detail which will determine just how smoothly his *Concilium* hypothesis can be translated to a pragmatics of Protestant liturgical performance in general, and of Reformed liturgical performance in particular. What is more: by making this comparison, we shall put ourselves in a position to assess more prescriptively whether subsequent 'doxologisations' of Ladrière's ideas - be they 'unconscious' in the case of Power and Kavanagh, or 'conscious' in the case of Fageberg - are actually justified, or whether the avowedly Protestant model proposed by Wainwright is, after all, a better reflection not only of what Christian worship is, but of what it *should* be. It is on to these matters that we shall now move.

### 3.4 Implications for a *Reformed* liturgical pragmatics

We have almost completed our survey of past explorations in the rough border territory of 'liturgical language pragmatics'. It has been necessary and proper to conduct this survey with thoroughness, because the paths previously trodden here seem to have run in so many different directions. Indeed until now, our task has largely consisted in identifying common 'patterns' of concern within what is a fragmented and as yet severely unintegrated area of scholarship. From this point on, we shall seek not only to draw such patterns of concern together, but to refine and address them in distinctive relation to a strand of liturgical practice which has not yet featured in pragmatic readings of sacral discourse - namely, the worship of the English Reformed Church.

Before bringing pragmatic methodologies to bear on Reformed liturgical *data*, it will be helpful to explain from a theoretical or doxological perspective just why this tradition of church worship might be *particularly* expected to provide a suitable case-study for the definition and prosecution of liturgical pragmatics.

We mentioned in 2.4.4 that among those who have published work on the philosophical aspects of liturgical language using speech act theory, both Vincent (1979) and Ware (1981) have done so with specific reference to Reformed worship. To their texts can be added a lecture delivered by the American Reformed theologian Nicholas Wolterstorff at Nottingham University on 11th November, 1993 under the title 'Philosophical Reflections on Calvin's Doctrine of the

Sacraments: An Approach Through the Philosophy of Language'<sup>1</sup>.

Now all three of these studies operate at a specifically 'doctrinal' level. Although Ware does offer a few examples from historic Protestant service books, these serve as illustrations for points *already* made in terms of 'Christian thought' (1981: 87ff.). While we have emphasised that our overall approach to liturgical language use will be more empirical than this, Vincent, Ware and Wolterstorff do offer significant clues as to how extant Reformed *doxologies* might compel the *divergence* of a Reformed liturgical pragmatics from the Roman Catholic model proposed by Ladrière and endorsed by Fageberg. Having said this, none of them show any actual awareness of Ladrière's work, and it therefore falls to us to make this divergence explicit.

Vincent, Ware and Wolterstorff echo Ladrière when they contend that speech act philosophy affords a new and fruitful 'way in' to liturgical theology. For Vincent, Austin's 'theory of performatives' is seen to present 'a suitable metalanguage for major elements in Calvin's [liturgiological] discourse' (1979: 149). For Ware, not only Austin but also Peirce, Wittgenstein and Searle are regarded as having 'opened up the possibility' of dealing with the 'symbols and symbolic acts' of worship 'in terms of their function rather than simply in terms of their ability to represent' (1981: 15). Likewise, Wolterstorff embraces Austin and Searle as providers of the 'most appropriate' contemporary framework for

---

1. As yet unpublished. Attended and noted by us.

comprehending Calvin's writing on baptism and the eucharist. Where Vincent and Wolterstorff especially distinguish themselves from Ladrière is in their explicit casting of Calvin, the 'founder' of the Reformed faith, in a clearly pioneering 'crypto-pragmatic' role vis à vis Christian doxology in general and the development of sacramental doctrine in particular. Thus while both alike resemble Ladrière in their insistence that liturgical discourse transcends purely 'constative' or logico-semantic models of language, they go on to argue that until Calvin, it was precisely such models which informed and restricted the construction of liturgical theology. For Vincent as for Wolterstorff, this legacy is attributed to the domination of Western Medieval theology by an Aristotelian predicate logic which defined linguistic meaning in terms of reference and denotative representation, rather than in terms of contextualized usage.

In Vincent's view, Calvin managed thus to shed the 'burden' of 'hypothesising an onto-theological parallelism in which...the predicative structure of a phrase normatively corresponds to a construction of (natural) reality expressed in terms of substance and accident' (1979: 150). More exactly,

In the Catholic conception - and, no doubt, in the Lutheran conception - the question of sacramental substance was very much expressed in natural terms: this question was framed within naturalistic parameters. Transubstantiation and consubstantiation are the two responses which dominate this way of thinking. With Calvin and Zwingli - albeit in different senses - we are engaged with an emphasis decided according to the effective dimension. The dual affirmation of Calvin - that Christ is the substance of the sacrament and that the presence of Christ is 'spiritual' *only makes sense from the perspective of Austin's theory of speech acts* (1979: 151, my emphasis. cf. Calvin [1559] 1960: IV.14.3ff.).

In similar fashion, Wolterstorff proposes that Thomas Aquinas' definitive appropriation of Aristotelian categories into Catholic doctrine made for a 'sign-agentive' or 'instrumentalist' view of language in which words were treated as the intrinsic, natural corollaries of ontological phenomena, rather than as neutral 'types' which gained performative force only when instantiated as 'tokens' in particular ecclesial settings.

Although Ware seems less convinced about Calvin's status as a 'proto-Austinian' doxologist (1981: 15), he does concur with the idea that strong Hellenic influences on Medieval doctrines of worship made for perspectives which became 'increasingly representational rather than transformational' (1981: 11). Indeed, Ware rather confirms Dix's dating of the shift in emphasis from 'doing' to 'saying' in Western rites when he argues that sometime after Augustine, in the 'Latin Middle Ages'<sup>2</sup>, the success of liturgy 'came to depend more on its ability to *represent* accurately past events and *explain* them and less on the quality of the speech act itself' (1981: 11 cf. Dix 1945: 13-14). As an antidote to all this, Ware (1981: 16-17) advocates a 'new' paradigm of worship in which liturgical performativity is seen not so much to 'recreate' past events or re-present past objects, as to 'encode' a 'form of life' defined symbolically in relation to the church as a social institution. For Vincent, this very paradigm can in fact *already* be found in Calvin, whose understanding of sacramental language is seen to show a remarkable affinity with

---

2. It should be stressed that for Ware, Augustine is seen as marking the end of the *previous* era of emphasis on God's Word as *active* and *transformatory* in worship, rather than the beginning of the succeeding period of the Middle Ages, in which it became increasingly representational.

Austin's stress on the *conventional* and *institutional* bases of many cardinal performatives (1979: 152 cf. Austin 1962: 107, 145ff.). Indeed, Vincent even goes so far as to suggest that it was Calvin's training as a lawyer which led him 'to conceive of various linguistic phenomena as affective and institutionalized phenomena, and not as phenomena of nature' (1979: 152). Vincent sees this 'anti-representational' and 'pro-institutional' emphasis epitomised in Calvin's famous comparison of the relationship between 'language' and 'object' in sacramental celebration to the sending of an institutionally sealed letter (cf. Calvin [1550] 1960: III.2.36-7):

The seal is a remarkable sign insofar as one could say that it adds nothing to the 'signifying substance' of the body of the letter itself. It exists wholly as an action: it consists of an authentication of the intention of the addressor of the message, and of a confirmation of that space within the letter in which the receiver is designated as addressee. As in the case of the sealed message, so in the case of the sacrament: the confirmation of *sincere intent* ('sincerity' being, for Austin, one of the validity conditions of the performative), coincides with what might be considered as the creation, in the receiver, of the attitude which befits that of an addressee...If one goes along with this model, one can grasp that the logic of sacramental reality is essentially interpreted in a linguistic context, and understood (epistemologically) from a linguistic perspective. (1979: 153).

Now we have seen that Ladrière makes much of the role of the ecclesial 'institution' in the effecting of liturgical performativity. It is also clear that his essential relation of sacral presentification to 'Word' and 'faith' signals an important 'bridging point' to Reformed liturgical theology. Nonetheless, closer inspection of Ladrière's argument reveals at least some traces of an 'essentialist', *de re* view of sacral language causation which would yet distinguish his liturgical pragmatics as

'Catholic', and at least partly 'Aristotelian', from the consciously 'Calvinistic', 'Reformed' and 'instrumentalist' liturgical pragmatics for which we are striving. Certainly, Ladrière does on occasion write as if liturgical language was possessed *in and of itself* with a peculiar illocutionary force, rather than receiving this force from liturgical *usage* alone. To borrow Wolterstorff's description of Aquinas' liturgiology, Ladrière manages - in spite of elsewhere deploying firm *de fide* and *de Verbo Dei* explanations of sacral discourse performativity - to imply a linguistic *sign-agency* even while emphasising the *God-agency* of liturgical language. Within this sign-agency, sacral performativity appears to reside in the very form, structure and composition of the words themselves, rather than in their contextual appropriation. Hence liturgical language is seen by Ladrière to 'put something into practice' (1973: 51, l.21); it is not just taken up operatively by its worshipping *users* - it also has an operative 'nature' (52, l.50); it thus 'awakens' in the person deploying it an 'affective disposition' which 'opens up' their existence to a 'specific field of reality' (56, l.186-8); at a corporate level, this same liturgical language is not just an 'instrument' used by the Christian community to constitute itself as a community: it is also the very thing which inherently *establishes* and *realises* that community (59, 309-10); similarly, it '*makes present...*that about which it *speaks* and which it *effects* in diverse ways' (59, l.333-6, my emphases). It thus has a 'revelatory essence' and 'origin' (60, l.357-80). Given these definitions, it comes as little surprise when Ladrière concludes by saying that liturgical language thus constitutes a 'sacramental accomplishment' of the mysteries it 'announces' and 'witnesses to'.



What is more, this 'sacramentality' applies not just to the immediate performatives of sacramental celebration like the Epiclesis, Absolution and Baptismal Pronouncement; it is, rather, intrinsic both to the whole 'Canon' of eucharistic observance including the *Sursum corda*, *Sanctus*, *Benedictus*, Offertory, Petition, Intercession, *Anamnesis*, Narrative and Ascription of Praise (58, l.281) - and seems often to cover the very fullest range of church service expression, from Opening Sentences to Benediction.

Now it is true that in both Saussure's and Ladrière's original French, '*langage*' is somewhat more connected to *usage* than mere *langue* (Lyons *et al* 1987: 18). It is also true that Ladrière sees 'le langage liturgique' as a 'totality' of illocutionary forms rather than a diaspora of atomistic sentences (55, l.105-53, 162-5). Nevertheless, he does still appear to 'sacramentalize' the actual *object* of liturgical language to an extent which would not be compatible with classical Reformed doxology - and which must in any case be questioned as to how faithfully it reflects Austin and Searle's *own* models, which at least *present* themselves as models of how *people* do things *with* words, rather than of any 'operativity' possessed by words themselves. It is significant that a similarly agentive and causative 'linguistic essentialism' informs the more recent Catholic doxologies offered by Power and Kavanagh. For Power (1984: 148), the entire Canon must be thought of 'sacramentally', while in Kavanagh's view, liturgical discourse 'itself begins to *think* and *speak* for the assembly and turns wholly into music, not in the sense of outward, audible sounds, but by virtue of the power of momentum of its inward

flow' (1984: 86, my emphasis).

Here, one surely begins to detect echoes of what Calvin and his successors so vigorously *opposed* in the Mass - namely, the notion that any set verbal formula could *in and of itself* ensure a 'holy' (or 'felicitous') act of praise (Calvin [1559] 1960: III.20.29 cf. Wainwright 1980: 263-83). Just as the Anglican Evangelical Thiselton (1974) sees this as a questionably 'magical' basis on which to expound Old Testament speech acts, so Vincent pertinently comments that 'the Calvinian critique of the way in which the Catholic Church manipulates the words of institution rests on this overriding perception: that there is no need to attribute to God any 'occult' power: the fiction of such a power is the result of a fictitious word, of a false word which wreaks betrayal even as it is whispered' (1979: 153). Certainly, it does seem that Ladrière, Power and Kavanagh's attachment to 'the Canon' as a lexically fixed and relatively monolithic 'entity' predisposes them to the sort of operative-linguistic essentialism we have been highlighting. No doubt too, this predisposition makes it easier for them then to promote 'theology' as something wholly 'brought about' in and by the language of worship, rather than as something which must be brought along to, and 'expressed by' such language.

In contrast, Reformed doxology from Calvin onwards has always been far more sceptical about the capacity of *any* set form of ritual language to realise 'true worship' or 'true doctrine' as a function of its own *composition*. Indeed, the concept of 'Canon' which is so fundamental to Ladrière, Power and Kavanagh's 'pragmatic' was one of the very first pillars of Roman liturgiology to be cast down by the

Calvinists - and not least by those in England. As Jasper points out (1986: 139), its abolition was 'almost an article of faith for the Reformers except for Cranmer. In nearly all Reformed rites it was normally reduced to the narrative of the institution with the possible addition of a prayer for worthy reception'<sup>3</sup>. What is more, this movement away from set forms was soon often extended into the *whole* of the church service - a trend which again became especially marked in England, where Reformed liturgies were first translated by William Huycke in 1550 and then more vigorously advocated by John Knox following his return from exile in Calvin's Geneva, where he had stayed during the reign of Queen Mary from 1554-59 (Spinks 1984a). Whereas Luther had insisted on vernacular worship while retaining the basic structure and content of the Mass, the Strasbourg Reformer Martin Bucer (1491-1551) not only severely reduced fixed formulae, but also pioneered a diet of *choices* at different points in his liturgies (eg. multiple confessions, optional *Kyries*, Psalms and hymns, variable pre-communion or 'long' prayers and a selection of three Thanksgivings (Thompson [1961 [1980] 159-66; Spinks 1984a: 53-4)). Having come under Bucer's formative influence for three years from 1538-41, Calvin carried this simplified and more flexible approach with him to Geneva, and although in some respects more conservative than his mentor (Spinks 1984a: 54), reiterated the pattern of a Canon distilled to its bare 'New Testament' kernel (Calvin

---

3. For a detailed account of Reformed simplifications of the Canon, see Spinks 1984a: 17ff.

[1542/5] 1980: 185-224; [1559] 1960: IV.17.43); Maxwell [1931] 1965: 121-43), while affording his Ministers freedom either to select or extemporize prayers such as those 'for illumination' and those 'after the sermon' (1542/5 [1980]; Nichols 1968: 44).

Just as Calvin had learnt from Bucer, so Knox both translated Calvin's Genevan liturgy and used it among his congregation of English exiles in Geneva from 1556 onwards (Spinks 1984a: 76ff.). Calvin's approach to liturgy had been strongly 'Biblicist' in conception: his reform of the Mass had proceeded on a firm prior assumption that the Word of God given in the Old and New Testaments was the sole admissible source for the discourse of worship - that 'no other word [was] to be held as the Word of God, and given place as such, in the church' ([1559] 1960: IV.8.8). Calvin's revision of worship was based on a corresponding conviction that Rome had added numerous 'useless rites' to the proper patterns of corporate praise laid down in the Scriptures ([1559] 1960: IV.10.19).

Unsurprisingly, Knox concurred with Calvin's assessments: not only was he adamant that 'diverse Popes...have added their portions to [the Canon descended from the Apostles]' (Knox [1848]: III: 48)<sup>4</sup>, he insisted that rites be 'limited within the compass of God's Word, which our Saviour has left us as only and sufficient to govern all our actions by' (Knox [1556] 1965: Preface). If anything, in fact, Knox

---

4. For consistency with quotations drawn from other modern editions of Reformed texts, I have modernised the spelling of Laing's edition of Knox's *Works* (full details of which are given in the Bibliography).

appears even *more* radical than Calvin on this point, having had to be advised by his mentor at one stage that milder sorts of 'extra-Biblical' ritual might be *provisionally* tolerated for the sake of church unity (Knox [1848]: 123-4). Indeed, R.L. Greaves (1980: 15) may well be right that Knox was at least as much influenced by Zwingli on this particular issue of liturgical-language criteria: certainly, the Zurich Reformer was clear that 'everything which is added to the true institutions of Christ is an abuse' and urged that such additions should be 'done away with at once' (cit. Garside 1966: 54).

Just as the growth of English Puritanism in the second half of the sixteenth century reflected Knox's liturgiological debts to Calvin and Zwingli, so its attachment to a 'pure Scriptural liturgy' continued and grew. So, the leading Puritan apologist William Fulke (1538-89) insisted that 'the church of God is the house of God, and therefore ought to be directed in all things according to the order prescribed by the Householder himself, which order is not to be learned elsewhere but in His Holy Word' ([1584] 1971: 243). Similarly, one of the first Puritan Separatists, Richard Fitz, desired that 'the sacraments be ministered purely, only and all together according to the institution and good word of the Lord Jesus, without any tradition or invention of man' ([1912]: 2/13). Such sentiments are resoundingly echoed in William Bradshaw's core summary of Puritan belief (1605), which makes it clear that 'whatsoever done in the service and worship of God cannot be justified by the Word of God, is unlawful'. Even more trenchant is John Greenwood's classic Puritan defence of the Bible as the true 'pattern' for worship:

The word leitourgia signifieth publicum mius ergon laon, the work of or for the people: that is, the very execution of the ministerial actions of the church, according to the word of all the officers thereof, that is the practise of all those ministerial duties prescribed by Christ, we may everywhere read...Now, to make another leitourgia is to lay another foundation, and to make another gospel, but there are some willing to pervert the gospel of Christ. ([1962]: 12).

Being fervently 'anti prayer book', Greenwood no doubt intended that his reference to 'perversion of the gospel' should apply to Anglicans as well as to Roman Catholics, since as Peter Toon has observed, for the Puritans' 'Biblically enlightened' consciences, 'the chief rock of offence was the large measure of continuity of the Roman Catholic past which persisted in the ministry and government of the [English] church, as well as in its liturgy and church furnishings' (1967: 1). Certainly, the Anglican attitude to viable sources and formulae for liturgical content developed into a far more 'permissive', intertextual scheme - one which is succinctly described in the twentieth of the Thirty Nine Articles of 1571, which states 'It is unlawful for the church to ordain anything that is contrary to God's Word in Scripture'. Clearly, there will be many more things which are not explicitly *condemned* by Scripture than are positively *approved* by it. Hence, the validation of liturgical forms in Anglicanism proved in practice far more diffuse than in either classical Presbyterianism or Independency (Spinks 1984a: 17-36).

Given the Puritan emphasis on worship ordered strictly according to the Reformation principle of *sola scriptura*, one is bound to ask how they managed this in practice. Particularly relevant for our study here is the challenge posed by Cranmer to Knox when the question of an exclusively Biblical worship-discourse

arose during preparation of the second *Book of Common Prayer* (1552). Cranmer's incisive query was 'For what should men prevail to set an order in the form of service, if no order can be set but that is already prescribed by Scripture?' (cit. Smyth 1926: 263-5). To re-phrase Cranmer's question for current purposes: 'What might a "thoroughly Biblical" liturgy look like?' and 'How might it be both vernacular (ie, intelligible) and unreservedly Scriptural at the same time?'.

Crucially for us, most English Reformed churches have resolved these questions by attempting not so much to reproduce vast chunks of Biblical language in precise form, as to maintain and promulgate in their services what they have perceived to be the underlying 'deep structures', 'propositional contents' and 'doctrines' of Scriptural discourse. Principally, they have done this by *rejecting* fixed orders of worship, the better to elevate the 'message' of the Biblical text as 'God's written Word' and thereby, to subjugate their worship completely *to* this Word (cf. Toon 1967: 16). We have already seen how Bucer, Calvin and Knox had revealed such an emphasis by implying that the same basic 'truths' could be conveyed in worship by a *variety* of linguistic expressions in different tongues, rather than by a set 'Canon' of Latin lexis and grammar. Indeed, although Vincent is right to draw parallels between Calvin's understanding of *sacramental* discourse and Austin's theory of speech acts, it must be stressed that the Reformed church yet consciously *reduced* the number of sacraments from seven to two - largely in reaction to the 'sacramentalization' of set liturgical phrases, and thus of sacral language *per se*, which its protagonists had perceived in the theory and practice of

the Mass. Moreover, as English Calvinists became increasingly convinced that this Roman tendency to sacramentalize the verbal form of liturgy had infiltrated the BCP, so they moved in varying degrees from 'fixed' liturgies towards an unprescribed, extemporary model of sacral discourse.

From early on, those who were Separatist in ecclesiology showed a marked mistrust of written orders. Where Calvin himself had endorsed linguistic variation at some points but retained fixed texts at others, English Separatists like John Field (1545-88), Henry Barrow (1550-93) and Robert Browne (1550-63) disavowed set liturgy altogether. Seemingly oblivious to the liturgical provenance of much in Scripture itself, these men and their followers held that the revealed 'apostolic model' of prayer was archetypally 'spiritual' - that is, contingently and spontaneously expressed in response to 'present wants and occasions' (Barrow [1970]: 366). Later, some even came to equate attachment to 'prayer books' with the sin of idolatry (Cotton 1642: 70; Smyth 1645: 29). From these standpoints, certain Puritan leaders even went so far as to question regular recitation of the Lord's Prayer, lest it become too sacramentalised and 'talismanic'. Thus the *Barrowist Deposition* of 1587 contended that it was 'a form of prayer not to be used for the Apostles did not used to say it' (cit. Burrage 1912: i.56), while the *Brownist Confession* of 1596 argued more subtly that rather than being given by Christ as a set verbal formula, it suggested 'not that we should be tied to the use of these very words, but that we should according to that rule make all our requests and thanksgivings unto God, forasmuch as it is a perfect form and pattern



conveying in its plain and sufficient directions of prayer for all occasions and necessities that have been, are, or shall be to the Church of God' (cit. Davies 1948: 98).

Even among those Calvinists who remained within the Church of England, the drive for a less rigidly monolithic and 'textualised' worship than the BCP became considerable. Right-wing Presbyterians tendered an alternative liturgy to Parliament based on Knox's *Genevan Service Book* (Davies 1948: 111), while Independents like John Owen (1616-83) went much further in advocating a thoroughly extemporary approach (Davies 1948: 111-2). By the time of the Westminster Assembly, summoned by Parliament during the Civil War between 1643-48, both Presbyterian and Independent opposition to the BCP had hardened into support for a *Directory* of worship which pronounced it an 'offence' and a 'burden' to countenance 'the reading of all the Prayers' (Westminster Directory [1644] 1980: 8). Although this *Westminster Directory* did not wholly reject the use of set forms, its predominant approach is one in which, though biblically-based 'contents' and 'structures' are defined, Ministers are allowed freedom to pray 'in their own words', as they are led by the Holy Spirit.

After the Restoration under Charles II and the Act of Uniformity in 1662, those subscribing to more extemporary techniques over against the BCP, found themselves forcibly ejected from the Church of England. Ever since, 'nonconformist' or 'Dissenting' Reformed worship in England has been characterised by either 'directory' or extemporary models of sacral language-use

(Gunton 1989: xii), and thus, by a repertoire of discourses which are either 'free' or 'semi-free' in nature (cf. Ferguson 1985: 208-9). These models have been distinguished by their supposing the written Word of God to be not only the 'supreme liturgical criterion' (Davies 1948: 52), but more specifically, a repository of prior divine ordinances or 'propositions', which it is the purpose of worship both to celebrate and 'explain'. As Toon has shown (1967: 16), the Puritans had typically 'high' theologies of Scripture - theologies which very soon issued in extremely 'ontological' doctrines of 'verbal inspiration' and 'inerrancy' (Heppe 1950: 12-41).

There is, of course, an acute irony in all of this. For all Vincent and Wolterstorff's insights into Calvin's 'pragmatic' model of *sacramental* discourse, it would appear that although English Calvinism has rejected 'predicative' concepts of *liturgical* language-meaning in favour of strongly 'contextualized' doxologies, it has done so on the supposition that *Scripture* will yet provide 'universal propositions' for the assembly to interpret and apply. Hence, while the logico-semantic paradigm may have disappeared from *liturgical* doctrine, it did not vanish altogether; instead, it was transferred to the doctrine of *Scripture*. It is no coincidence that many commentators have thus identified in post-Reformation Calvinism an Aristotelian-style 'Scholasticism' of Biblical language to match Medieval Scholastic depiction of the Mass (Rogers & McKim 1979; Vos 1992: 342). Quite how 'scholastic' Calvin himself is in his own doctrine of Scripture has long been an issue of debate (Hodgson & King 1982: 95; Godfrey 1983, cf. Rogers & McKim 1979). Certainly, he regarded the Old and New Testaments as the exclusive location in which God

had 'hallowed his truth to everlasting remembrance' ([1559] 1960: I.7.1) and argued that the Bible alone contained 'perfect doctrine' ([1958b]: 397). What is more, Scripture for Calvin was 'self-authenticating' - its own best interpreter ([1559] 1960: I.8.5). What is beyond doubt is his conviction that this same Word of God was the ground and starting-point for all true worship. Thus for Calvin, 'by His Word alone God sanctifies temples to himself for lawful use', and 'God breathes faith into us only by the instrument of his Gospel' ([1559] 1960: IV.1.5; IV.8.11; IV.2.4).

Given these premises, it is hardly surprising that the central focus of worship in Calvin's doxology is the *teaching, preaching and proclamation* of 'perfect doctrine' in the sermon ([1559] 1960: IV.8.8). Where Ladrière and Fageberg reflect Catholic thinking in seeing the language of the *Canon* as 'constituting' the Christian community, Calvin declared that 'the church is built up solely by outward preaching' ([1559] 1960: IV.1.5).

As it has developed, the Reformed church has very much borne out this pedagogic-homiletic paradigm of worship. Both in practice and in doctrine, 'the proclamation of the Word' has proved foundational in the evolution of its services - often at the expense of other parts of the liturgy. Although the isolation of a 'preaching service' from a 'Lord's Supper service' was first essayed by Zwingli in Holy Week 1525, and although Calvin himself pressed long and hard for a weekly celebration of the eucharist, the fact remains that the Genevan magistrates' decision to hold communion on only a quarterly basis proved normative for the vast

majority of Reformed Confessions for centuries afterwards (Davies 1948: 182; Wolterstorff 1992: 294-5). Positively, this renewed emphasis on the sermon made Scripture comprehensible to ordinary worshippers in a way which had hardly been possible in a Mass where preaching had usually been either non-existent or else read from a prescribed 'Book of Homilies' (Davies 1948: 190; Jones *et al* 1978: 376-7; Fuller 1986: 485). Negatively however, it appears to have ushered in an overweeningly 'didactic' bias in liturgical discourse - a bias which remains the most commonly-criticised element of the Reformed service among liturgists today, and which has been attacked for extending far beyond the sermon itself, into parts of worship for which it is entirely unfitted, eg. the prayers, anaphora etc. (Bouyer 1963: 57; Mayor 1972: 27; Grainger 1974: 36-7; Ware 1981: 155-6; Old 1984: 101; Maxwell 1986a: 458).

Although some *modern* Reformed theologians have hypothesised the value of reducing such didacticism, their doxological systems remain largely driven by 'proclamation'. For example, Karl Barth's magisterial Reformed *Dogmatics* opens with an exposition of the Doctrine of the Word of God in which 'the Word of God preached' is seen to constitute 'the function of the church's life which governs all others' ([1936] 1975: 88). Granted, whereas Ladrière casts the proclamatory aspect of liturgical performativity purely in terms of reciting a fixed creed, Barth presents the proclamatory 'act' of the sermon as 'a new event in which the event of human talk is not set aside by God but exalted, in the Word of God' ([1936] 1975: 95). As MacQuarrie has observed (1967: 45), in this regard Barth's outlook has much in

common with the 'performative language' approach to worship. Even so, the 'commencement' of preaching for Barth is still 'the Word of God written' - that is, the revealed text of Holy Scripture ([1936] 1975: 102). As George Hunsinger has shown (1993: 47), although Barth has a strongly 'pragmatic' conception of both Scriptural and homiletic language-meanings, he still 'seems clearly to presuppose that the truth and intelligibility of theological claims are in some sense *logically* independent of the rightness and truthfulness with which they may either be advanced or contradicted on the human plane'. In other words, a 'cognitive' view of truth at the level of *doctrinal* discourse transcends a 'performative' view of truth at the level of *liturgical* discourse.

In a similar vein, while von Allmen (1965) sets great store by a holistic pattern of liturgy freed from the 'rationalist heresy' which sees Scripture making worship redundant, he nonetheless describes the sermon as 'that phase of worship in which the preacher can *bear witness to the truth and reality of what has been proclaimed* by the reader of Scripture' (1965: 143, my emphases). Still, it is the 'propositions' of the Bible which predetermine the 'performance' of worship; still, doctrine is 'brought along' to the rite more than it is 'brought about' *in* the rite.

Here we come back full-circle to Wainwright, for though a Methodist rather than a strictly Reformed churchman, he nonetheless leans towards the Reformed/Protestant model of doxology - that is, the same method of taking 'the dogmatic norm of belief as setting a rule for prayer, so that what must be believed governs what may and should be prayed' (1980: 251). The difference is that now

we have a much better understanding of *why* Reformed theologians and liturgists seem to have operated in this way rather than according to the converse model of *lex orandi, lex credendi* advocated by Catholics like Ladrière, Power, Kavanagh and Fageberg - a model in which 'what is prayed indicates what may and must be believed' (Wainwright 1980: 251). Specifically, it would appear that Reformed doxology has rejected an essentialistic or causal performativity of 'the Canon' for fear of what Bouyer (1963: 57) calls 'an empty encrustation of ritual' - an 'occultic' imputation of power to the very *form* of sacral language itself, rather than to its function as an *instrument by which* God communicates the 'truth of His Word'. On the other hand, Catholics appear justified in having accused the Reformed tradition of too often assuming that this 'truth' exists only *prior to* and *distinct from* worship, as a set of dogmatic 'statements' which are 'contained' in Scripture and which must be 'taught', 'explained' and 'proclaimed' in preaching.

In Part II of our study, we shall attempt to show that despite their each having more recently claimed linguistic-pragmatics as an ally, *neither* of these versions of *lex orandi, lex credendi* has managed adequately to realise the implications of pragmatics for the analysis of liturgical meaning. Partly, we shall confirm that this is because they have almost all failed to recognise that pragmatics entails much more than a 'theory of performatives'. Also, however, we shall show that it is because they have largely neglected to relate their doxology to the *actual practice of worship in the church context to which it belongs* - a neglect which has caused them unduly to abstract and idealize the concept of 'performativity', so leading to

an exaggeratedly polarised view of its meaning on each side.

More specifically still, rooting these doxological concerns in empirical analysis should help us to test just how 'didactic' English Reformed worship really *is*, and thus to assess whether the excessively pedagogical image of it propounded by liturgical theologians is supported by the actual data of liturgical *performance*. In addition, we should also be able to test whether the movement of the English Reformed church away from 'written' service books and towards 'spoken' extemporary services corresponds in any way with pragmatic distinctions between 'writing' and 'speech'.

With these expectations in mind, we now turn to the collection and presentation of the data with which we shall be working.

## CHAPTER 4

### PRAGMATICS AND THE DATA OF LITURGICAL PERFORMANCE: AN EMPIRICAL APPROACH TO THE SACRAL SPEECH EVENT

#### 4.1. The place and use of corpus data in pragmatics

Given that pragmatics is by definition concerned with the functions of language in context, Leech is surely right to surmise that 'a fully fledged pragmatic theory would not only be formalized, but would also be capable of empirical testing' (1983: 230). Ferrara (1985: 139) makes a similarly plausible case when he suggests that 'ideally pragmatics would want to base its claims about appropriateness conditions on a firm empirical basis and...link its description of abstract act types to their roots in concrete social and cultural groups'. Indeed, one might even suggest that a pure 'theoretical pragmatics' would entail not only a paradox, but a contradiction in terms. What is more, these points gain particular pertinence when applied to the pragmatics of *liturgy*. Just as even the most transcendent doxology must be grounded in the immanent worship of the local church (Wainwright 1980: 349-52; 357-69), so any allied discipline of 'liturgical pragmatics' will have to echo the praise of specific congregations as well as the worship of the whole body of Christ. This is especially true for the Reformed



church, whose identity has most often been defined through 'a particular assembly in one village, city or province' using its own 'ecclesiastical rites', as well as through 'an oecumenical and universal assemblage scattered through out the whole world' (Leiden Synopsis [1625] 1881: XL, 33; Heppe 1950: 664-669).

Now Leech specifically argues that 'confirmation of pragmatic hypotheses can be sought by analysis of corpus data'. Where such analysis is undertaken, it will be predicted that conformity to a given maxim is considerably more likely than nonconformity; then again, says Leech, 'it is always possible that if corpus findings contradict the hypothesis, this can be explained as due to the influence of competing maxims' (1983: 231). This scenario bears out David Crystal's definition of 'corpus' as 'a collection of...either written texts or a transcription of recorded speech, which can be used as a starting-point of linguistic description *or as a means to verifying hypotheses about language*' (1980: 94, my emphasis). Certainly, there is no reason to suppose that the use of corpora in pragmatics should be any more troublesome than in those other branches of language-study where their place is more established (Leech 1983: 231). From this point of view, Levinson also predicts and encourages the development of pragmatics in a more corpus-based vein, contending that 'the proper way to study conversational organization is through empirical techniques' (Levinson 1983: 285). Ironically perhaps, Levinson's textbook still belongs to that vast majority of pragmatics literature which fails to demonstrate such commitment to empiricism with original data of its own.<sup>1</sup>

---

1. To be fair, some of Levinson's other work on language-use in fact bucks this trend (cf. Brown & Levinson 1987).

Rather, in a move whose import for *us* will become clear in a moment, Levinson presents extant research by various ethnographers of communication as providing the most appropriate 'model' for a corpus-inclusive pragmatics (1983: 284ff.). Despite this general lack of dedicated, 'first-hand' experimentation, Levinson does at least usefully trace the consequences which might attend such a shift in emphasis, and his comments here relate directly to our own search for a valid analytical framework:

...the largely philosophical traditions that have given rise to pragmatics may have to yield in future to more empirical kinds of investigation of language usage. Conceptual analysis using introspective data would then be replaced by careful inductive work based on observation. The issue raised here is whether pragmatics is in the long term an essentially empirical discipline or an essentially philosophical one, and whether the present lack of integration in the subject is due primarily to the absence of adequate theory and conceptual analysis or to the lack of adequate observational data, and indeed an empirical tradition (1983: 285).

Levinson in fact co-opts none other than Austin (1956: 131-2) in support of pragmatics' transfer from linguistic philosophy to social science. Not all linguists, however, are convinced by the line of progression which sees language-analysis developing inevitably from a deductive philosophical discipline into one driven by 'public observation' and 'experimentation'. Chomskyan linguistics, for example, is characteristically sceptical about the value of 'empirical' studies, holding that corpora cannot adequately reflect the structure of a *whole* language and are thus liable to offer findings which are contingent, accidental and selective: as Wallace Chafe sums up this view, 'the possibilities inherent in language are quite vast,

and...it may be fortuitous whether something turns up in one's 'corpus' or not' (1986: 215, cf. Chomsky 1965: 4). Chomsky's 'generative grammar' relies primarily on the introspection of the analyst, rather than on data collected in the field. Moreover, this preference is deliberate and studied - it derives not from academic laziness but from a closely-argued prioritisation of 'competence' over 'performance', from a quest for 'language universals' rather than potentially misleading 'particular cases', and from a conviction that linguistics is at bottom a branch of cognitive psychology (1965: 4). As Crystal points out (1971: 105), this professedly 'mentalist' perspective<sup>2</sup> is indeed far removed from that adopted by the mainstream scientist, who would go to strenuous lengths to exclude personal intuitions from his/her data on the grounds that they would undermine objectivity. Chafe is similarly alive to the drawbacks of introspection, and ironically highlights its potential for denying, rather than confirming, the 'universals' of language:

...introspection is famous for its penchant for being influenced by the introspector's idiosyncratic experience and expectations. Different introspectors come up with different results, even when they are introspecting about the same thing, although they often appear not even to be doing that. Many arguments arise from these difficulties. Beyond that, as psychologists have been quick to point out, there are many things we do that we are *not* aware of, things that are *not* accessible to our consciences (1986: 216).

---

2. Crystal is clear that not *all* generative grammarians are mentalists, and stresses that though they might shun introspection, scientists do not always rely on pure observation - eg. the concept of the atom was formulated without directly observed phenomena.

Heeding the points made so far, it would seem inadvisable to pursue *our* analysis here on either too introspective and theoretical a basis, or on too corpus-dominated a level: clearly, each emphasis has its demerits. One of the most lively debates in modern pragmatics has, in fact, precisely concerned the proper methodological balance between 'formalist', 'generative' or 'predictive' approaches, and those which arise more from a 'natural language' or sociolinguistic perspective (Leech and Thomas 1990, Bickhard and Campbell 1992; Chametzky 1992; Sarangi & Sembrouck 1992). The issues raised by these studies in turn hark back to Habermas' seminal hermeneutic assessment of the tension between 'empirical-analytic' and 'universal reconstructive' approaches to pragmatics. Although Habermas himself robustly defends the priority of the 'universalist' paradigm, his argument is nuanced enough to recognise that this should not be taken to deny the value of inductive sociolinguistic data. Indeed, like Crystal (1976: 17), he acknowledges that in investigative *practice*, the two will often be closely linked (1979: 32-3). Tilley, by comparison, is not only much more sanguine about the use of corpora; he tips the scales firmly in their direction and follows Nussbaum's (1986: 270) condemnation of the 'reductionist scientism' of much classical speech act theory:

...speech act theorists tend to spend little time portraying concrete speech acts. Their interest is generally in providing rules which account for language use. Once the theorist has explicated the rules, there is no need to deal with the messy particularity of speech situations, for these are of no real philosophical or linguistic interest. The *real* interest can then be pursued: forming a philosophy of mind or showing how individual minds acquire the rules that give them the cognitive capacity to use language or perform the mental and speech acts that they perform (see Searle 1983). However, such an approach cannot explain speech

acts... A speech act theory composed only of rules is reductionistic. (1991: 16-7 n1).

It is largely in view of the widely differing opinions on how pragmatics should be done that we ourselves have resolved here to follow Chafe (1986) in attempting a consciously 'catholic' programme of analysis - one in which established pragmatic hypotheses are treated seriously in relation both to doxological principles and our own 'liturgico-linguistic' competence, but where such universalizing concepts are tested - and even modified - by reference to specific, observed discourses. In aiming for such catholicity, it is important to realise that, far from adopting an entirely novel strategem, we shall simply be making explicit certain assumptions already underlying the two approaches in question. In this regard, Crystal again suggests a helpful reflection:

[No mentalist would] deny the relevance of empirical data, in the sense that in working out his system of rules for competence, and finding that his rules were not producing the sentences to be found in any corpus, he would conclude that something was wrong somewhere, and presumably would go back and re-examine his conscience. A point of contact with empirical data... has to be made sooner or later. From the other side, no anti-mentalist would in fact restrict himself to the patterns he found in a corpus, as if he were the linguistic equivalent of a jigsaw-puzzle enthusiast. A corpus-based linguist is not necessarily a *corpus-restricted* one - and I have never in fact met a 'corporate' scholar who believes that his rules do not in some way transcend his data - that is, account for the patterns in his corpus and a lot more besides...(1971: 107).

Bearing these insights in mind, let us now turn to the specific issues involved in assembling and using a *liturgical* corpus for pragmatic analysis.

#### 4.2. The use of corpora in liturgical language study: precedents and principles

In his definition of the three-fold 'method-theory-fieldwork' schema which we are applying here, Crystal suggests that empirical analysis will complement methodological and theoretical exposition of religious language-use by ensuring 'the establishment of a detailed formal description of systematic covariation between linguistic features (of whatever kind) and social context' (1976: 17).

Even as we endorse such an approach, however, the problem remains that the sort of corpus-driven pragmatics envisaged by this model, and then prescribed by Leech, Levinson and Ferrara, is as yet 'far undeveloped' (Leech 1983: 231; cf. Rose 1992: 49). What is more, we have seen very clearly that the few existing efforts to apply pragmatics to the language of *liturgy* have concentrated near exclusively on deductive philosophical models like Austin and Searle's classifications of illocutionary acts (Jeffner 1972; Ladrière 1973; Mananzan 1974; Ravenhill 1976, Thiselton 1986 [1975]: 18-20; 1992: 299), or Grice's Conversational Maxims (Warner 1990). As such, they have tended to incorporate actual liturgical data only in order to *underline* or *illustrate* the *a priori* hypotheses which these models have proposed. All this is despite Gill's formative commendation of linguistic-pragmatic 'spadework' on religious discourse (1969) and Schmidt's unequivocal declaration that 'only by research, experience and experiment can we find out whether liturgical language in its components or performances is valuable or worthless'

(1971: 7). Admittedly, Martinich (1975a; 1975b) did substantially *remodel* Searle's taxonomy for Roman Catholic ritual, but his 'data' was still culled from general printed worship books rather than from 'the field' - that is, from specific, local liturgical performance. The same limitation applies on the Protestant side to the work of Vincent (1979), Ware (1981) and Wolterstorff (1993). Meanwhile, Charles Ferguson's brief but useful digest of, and programme for, the study of religious language does claim some basis in the casual observation of campus chapel worship (1985: 206), but this is more anecdotal than empirical, and Ferguson himself admits that he is doing little more than raising issues for others to pursue. Even Tilley (1991), who is certainly conversant with later developments in pragmatics and whom we have just seen placing such strong emphasis on the social and 'institutional' dimension of liturgy, still confines himself either to his own introspection or to a loose amalgam of 'illustrative' texts, rather than dealing inductively with a systematic corpus of religious and liturgical material. Thus an 'encyclical' from American Catholic Bishops on nuclear weapons procurement serves to exemplify one range of 'Institutionally Bound' speech acts, while Martinich's insights on marriage and baptism are reworked to exemplify another. Likewise, short extracts from Buddha's sermon at Benares, from God's covenant with Abram (Gen 15) and from Augustine's *Confessions* are used demonstrate a theoretical class of 'Institutionally Free' speech acts.

Now as we indicated in 2.4.5, empirical studies on *exotic* sacral discourse abound in the pragmatically-related fields like anthropological linguistics and the

ethnography of communication; it is, after all, a basic axiom of these disciplines that the identity of a culture or sub-culture will be significantly embodied in the 'enactment' of its rites and ceremonies (Malinowski 1935; Saville-Troike 1989: 41-4). Typical examples of such research are the work of Tambiah on the 'magical power' of Sinhalese ritual formulae (1968); Fabian's (1971) anatomy of genre-definition in the Jamaa worship of Shaba, Africa; Fitzgerald's analysis of worship language among the Ga of Southern India (1975), and Zaretsky's ethnosemantic categorisation of the language used by Spiritualist churches in California (1970; 1972). As we shall see, these sources offer certain general guidelines for an 'experimental' pragmatics of liturgy. The fact remains, however, that they are focussed on religious traditions which differ markedly from that mainstream Western Christianity with which the Reformed church - despite its missionary expansion - is most readily associated<sup>3</sup>.

All in all there would appear to be extant only a handful of genuinely corpus-based studies on liturgical language-use in European / American church services - and even these have tended to be either very brief, only incidentally linguistic, or otherwise decidedly limited in scope. Over thirty years ago, Pike (1967 [1954-60]: 73-92) essayed a detailed analysis of kinesic and linguistic 'segmentation' in one Sunday morning service at 'a young independent church' of 'a rather informal evangelical type' - a church he had attended 'on numerous previous occasions'.

---

3. Undoubtedly, thanks to the major missionary initiatives of the 19th century, there are now members of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches in all major continents (Vischer 1982). Many of these have developed 'indigenous' liturgies', but it is the 'Geneva' model, derived from Calvin and based in turn on the ancient Latin Sacramentaries, which dominates. For confirmation of this see Sell (1991).



This remains a key resource for the liturgical pragmatician, emphasising as it does Pike's conviction that 'there are units underlying social structure that are analogous to those which underlie language structure' (1967 [1954-60]: 96; cf. Bock 1962). Nevertheless, Pike's data is confined to just one congregation and, in any event, is used more as 'case study' material for a general demonstration of how behavioural scientists might 'break down' the constituent elements of *any* corporate ritual. Even greater generality attaches to the work of Werner Jetter (1978), whose concern for the function of 'symbol' in the church service is anthropological in the broadest sense rather than particularly linguistic-pragmatic. Likewise, despite its title, we have already noted that Lardner's 'pragmatics' of liturgy (1979) in fact applies a broad sociology of communication to introspections about the Mass which are only incidentally linguistic.

A considerably deeper and more concentrated pool of data underlies the work of Rosenberg (1970a). Presenting no fewer than 17 transcripts from seven separate ministers, Rosenberg investigates the language of extemporary 'folk preaching' in various locations across the USA. His analysis is sensitive and his findings insightful. What is more, his data-gathering technique - a combination of audio-taping and interviewing - suggests an apt precedent for further 'field' studies of worship discourse. On the other hand, Rosenberg's focussing on sermons alone means that he cannot capture the diversity and variation of registers which go to make up the whole speech event 'church service'. In this sense, he cannot be said to have modelled a genuine pragmatics of *liturgy*.

Similar preoccupation with just one facet of worship marks the relatively large number of well-sampled linguistic studies on glossolalia, or 'speaking in tongues' (eg. Goodman 1969; Hine 1969; Samarin 1969; 1972a; 1972b) - a phenomenon which is particularly associated with Pentecostalism, but which has entered many mainline churches during the last three decades through the so-called Charismatic Renewal movement (Ward 1984: 192-208; Davies 1986: 220-30; Hesselink [1975] 1992). Hine's survey is particularly extensive, comprising as it does '45 case histories, 239 self-administered questionnaires, informal interviews with leaders and members of more than 30 Pentecostal groups, and participant-observation in seven churches and prayer groups' (1969: 211). For all this, however, glossolalia remains a single issue within the wider realm of liturgical-language study, and for our purposes it also must be recognised that Reformed churches have been among the most reluctant to embrace it (Bittlinger 1981; Pursey 1992). By contrast, David Crystal (1976) engages not only a major (Roman Catholic) liturgical tradition, but also a wide range of standard 'modalities' within the Mass - namely unison prayer, individual prayer, Biblical reading and sermons. This said, his analytic concerns are very specialised, focussed as they are on the non-segmental *phonology* of worship rather than the more general pragmatic features it might display. Furthermore, although he has since usefully mapped out a much broader sociolinguistic framework for the study of liturgical language-use (1990), this is demonstrated purely with reference to the *written* texts of Catholicism and Anglicanism. The former article, at least, is based on four hours of field recording plus questionnaires,

gathered over a two week period. Like Pike, however, Crystal limits himself to one congregation only, thereby missing any variation which might occur between different churches in different settings.

While all the studies mentioned so far shed light on the anatomy of a corpus-inclusive pragmatics, it is from another group of analyses, all conducted by those schooled in the ethnography of communication, that the clearest lessons may be drawn for the approach we are seeking here. Jules-Rosette's doctorate on the Apostolic Church of John Marangue in Central Africa (1973) presents an exhaustive account of language-context interaction in religious ceremonial, but perhaps the most important examples for our purposes are those set by Güllich (1980) and Enninger & Raith (1982).

Güllich's work is concerned with the relation of formalized discourses to the *institutions* in which, by which and for which they are generated. Although she scrutinizes the language of various other bodies, she shows an acute appreciation of just how *liturgical* interaction both reveals and instantiates ecclesiastical identity. In this respect, her approach can be seen crucially to complement Ladrière's much more philosophical portrayal of 'Institution' as a vital component in doxological performativity (Ladrière 1973: 58-9). Güllich's research is, in her own words, oriented 'more to the analysis of *empirical oral material* than to the discussion of theoretical problems' (1980: 419, my emphasis). Specifically, this entails her having recorded and transcribed various services in the united Protestant Church of Germany between 1977 and 1979, as well as having undertaken detailed exegesis

of that church's *Books of Order*. Such in-depth data-gathering in turn facilitates strongly 'functional' readings of a range of liturgical discourses, including welcome, blessing, confession of faith, prayer introduction, notice-giving, the peace, confirmation, sermon and ministerial induction. Admittedly, Gülich relates neither her corpus nor her ethnographic exposition of it to pragmatic theory *per se*, but her fieldwork on the discourse of blessing does at least form the raw material of a subsequent article by Reinhard Wonnenberger (1984), which deals directly with 'The blessing as a liturgical speech act', and which thus seeks to make 'a contribution to the pragmatics of the institutional church service'. Though fairly brief and narrowly-defined, this article does at least represent a working example of how empirical data-gathering *can* interact with, and so modify, the 'classical' taxonomies of illocutionary activity which have been formulated by philosophers like Austin and Searle. It is especially significant that Wonnenberger claims to conduct his enquiry 'independent of intra-theological teaching' (1984: 1070) - that is, treating Gülich's data as a *contribution to* liturgical-discourse theory, rather than as a purely post hoc *illustration of* it. On a larger scale, it is Wonnenberger's kind of inductive-deductive reciprocity which we require here.

Gülich also provides a key reference-point for the magisterial work of Enninger & Raith (1982) on Old Order Amish worship. We have already made it clear that for all its merits, this study follows an agenda which goes far beyond linguistic pragmatics, proceeding as it does on the basis that 'the church service ceremony can ultimately be modeled as a multicodecated supersign, a semiotic system

in its own right' (1982: vii). Indeed, like Gülich, Enninger & Raith actually bypass the work of specialist pragmaticians. Nonetheless, their four-fold 'data base', consisting of historical material on Amish culture and theology, 'internal' publications such as prayer books and service manuals, notated records of spoken and non-spoken liturgical action, and voluntary informant testing, suggests a precedent which would readily apply to a pragmatics of English Reformed worship. After all, here too is a Protestant tradition, the development of whose thought and culture need to be understood lest its ceremonies appear as 'meaningless routinized behavior' (cf. Enninger & Raith 1982: vii, Ferguson 1985: 211, Kelleher 1993: 318). Here too, is a phenomenon whose own 'folk taxonomies' can 'serve as guidelines as to how the members of the culture isolate and construct the social event 'church service' (cf. Enninger & Raith 1982: 3). Here too, is a tradition for whom the Word of God is archetypally 'enacted' in the context of corporate praise (1982: 46ff cf. von Allmen 1965: 54; Barth 1975 [1936]: 88ff.). Here moreover, is a Christian community far more extensive and socially significant than the Old Order Amish - a community the traces of whose emergence in the Sixteenth century are seen in a contemporary worldwide constituency of some 70 million Reformed Christians (Sell 1992: 403). If Enninger and Raith had a case for the 'empirical' study of liturgical performance, then surely so do we.

Recently, Margaret Mary Kelleher (1993) has woven the diverse experimental strands which we have been considering into a more systematic programme for what she calls the 'hermeneutics of liturgical performance'. Not surprisingly, this

programme is also based firmly on methodologies used in the ethnography of communication - methodologies which she reports are 'gradually being recognized as...significant...in the field of liturgical studies' (1993: 292). Although our own research data had already been gathered when her paper was published, the approaches which we have used, and which we recount in the rest of this Chapter, will be seen both to support Kelleher's programme and to endorse the 'empirical turn' she has identified elsewhere.

Having said all this, it would be foolish to pretend that in this single study we could conclusively redefine either liturgiology, or pragmatics itself, as disciplines based on induction when their development has been so firmly along deductive lines. Neither should it be forgotten that a major touchstone of our analysis is Jean Ladrière's intensely *doctrinal* and *conceptual* theory of liturgical language 'performativity'. Still, it is noteworthy that even Ladrière hints at a more inductive development of his own thesis, albeit leaving such work to be done by others:

The time to which liturgical language refers...has an eschatological structure. A more detailed analysis would have to try to reveal this structure in the internal organization of liturgical language. Only thus could one show in what way it really 'makes present' that which it talks of. (1973: 61, L.394-399)

The phrase 'internal organization' here is vague and rather misleading, but taken in the context of Ladrière's whole hypothesis, it must mean something more than syntactic or semantic exegesis. Indeed, given his stress on 'performance', the most appropriate test of Ladrière's ideas about liturgical language would surely be

provided by the sort of corpus-inclusive pragmatics we have been advocating.

If the case for undertaking *some form* of data-based analysis is clear, it is crucial that we collect and deploy such data in an appropriate manner. First and foremost, it should now be obvious that if we are to minimise the arbitrariness which Chafe warns against, it is imperative that such data be well-defined, suitably 'controlled' and reasonably extensive. Kelleher's advice to the corpus-inclusive liturgical hermeneut is germane in this regard: 'use interpretative frameworks that do justice to the multi-dimensional nature of performance and to the complexity of the ritual field' (1993: 318). With these guidelines in mind, let us now consider the material with which we ourselves shall be working.

### 2.3. Original data used in this study

In 3.4 we suggested that Reformed liturgy would be of particular interest to the pragmatician due to its characteristic mix of 'written' and 'oral' rites. Furthermore, we saw that this mix was especially marked in the English Reformed tradition, whose major strands are in large part defined by different attitudes towards textualised vs. non-textualised ritual. Given this, it is appropriate that our analysis should focus on both formal or 'scripted' discourse *and* on extemporary or 'unscripted' worship language. We shall come to see that these distinctions are more complex than might be supposed, but at this point it is enough to define the former

category as comprising printed texts designed for use in a number of congregations. We shall refer to this category using the term '*prayer book material*', although it is important to note that this category subdivides into those texts authorised by a denominational body for widespread use, and other publications produced on a more independent basis by individuals or groups. Furthermore, it should be noted that in the 'Free Church' situation with which we are dealing, the rites, prayers and litanies proposed in such material will not always be used in their entirety: very often, certain sections or 'portions' will be extracted for some especially formal passage (eg. Holy Communion) within an act of worship which otherwise eschews published orders. Having said this, whatever the extent of its use, such 'prayer book' discourse can clearly be differentiated from that which is not reliant on a ratified text. Typically, the interlocutor in 'non-prayer book' worship will be more immediately responsible for the *formation* and *ideation* of discourse than is the participant who reads from a standard liturgical order, where the only significant 'encoding variables' are intonation and (possibly) gesture.

Of course, it does happen that either whole congregations or individual worship leaders will deploy texts produced purely for local worship. These may enjoy long-term use, or may simply be 'one-offs' composed with a single service in mind. Though clearly more idiosyncratic than authorised or commercially produced liturgies, these will still retain a level of 'scriptedness' marked in its contrast to the kind of thoroughly extemporary discourse common in English Reformed churches since the rise of Radical Puritanism (Spinks 1984a: 28-36).



We shall look more closely at issues of liturgical 'fixity' and 'formulaicity' in Chapter 8, but as far as *data* is concerned it is surely preferable to draw on as many of the categories mentioned as possible: this way, we stand more chance of reflecting the characteristic diversity of Reformed worship. Fig. 1. summarises the categories of material we have mentioned and identifies appropriate means of collection for each. From this chart it is clear that our corpus should consist of material gathered in two basic ways: first, by the simple selection of written liturgical material; and second, by fieldwork carried out on specific acts of worship. What is more, since performed church services will themselves often display mixed use of 'scripted' and extemporary types, it is clear that 'in situ' data collection can to a large extent subsume other methods (see Fig 1):

LITURGICAL DISCOURSE CATEGORY	DATA SOURCES	DATA COLLECTION METHOD	LOCAL CONTEXT SPECIFICITY
1. Authorised 'prayer book' texts	Libraries/ Bookshops	Gathering a range representative texts & portions	Low
2. Unauthorised 'prayer book' texts	Libraries/ Bookshops	Gathering a range representative texts & portions	Low
3. Printed local texts for long-term use	Specialist libraries & churches	As 1, & requesting copies from local congregations	Fairly High
4. Printed local texts for 'one-off' or short-term use	Local churches & fieldwork	Gathering copies from local congregations	High
5. Personal inter-locutor scripts	Fieldwork	Background questionnaire & recording 'in situ'	Very High
6. Performed worship discourse	Fieldwork	Recording 'in situ'	Extremely High

Figure 1. Major categories of Reformed liturgical discourse, with appropriate methods of data collection.

### 2.3.1 Published material: the URC *Service Book* (1989)

Although often stereotyped as a tradition shaped by the rejection of prayer books (Gunton 1989: vi), it should be acknowledged that even while not legally imposed, formal worship texts have been published, distributed and used throughout the history of the Reformed church (Maxwell 1955: 53). In his comprehensive survey of English Congregational liturgy alone, Spinks lists more than 30 such texts, and also identifies several rites produced and printed 'in house' by local churches (Spinks 1984b: 270-87). Presbyterianism, meanwhile, has been even more wedded to the concept of 'common order' (Barkley 1966: 22-40). As for the modern United Reformed Church, Robinson's 1984 study of worship styles in local congregations revealed that approximately 10% made use of some kind of 'prayer book' available to every member of the congregation, while around 30% observed services which were 'mainly fixed', implying that the Minister probably made use of a published 'script' even if this was not seen by all (Robinson 1987: 17)<sup>4</sup>. Moreover, even though the rest of the service might have been 'unscripted', over 50% of churches were described as using a printed rite for communion (Robinson 1987: 38). Taking all this into account, our examination of pragmatic hypotheses will from time to time draw upon the *historic* service books and printed

---

4. Robinson's survey covered 93 separate URC congregations, representatives from each being questioned at a major church conference in August, 1984. There are 1,813 URC's, so this represented a near 5% sample.

rites of the Reformed tradition from the mid-Sixteenth century onwards. Specifically however, we shall pay very particular attention to the most recent addition to the 'textual' tradition of English Reformed worship - namely the 1989 URC *Service Book*. While *itself* drawing on a wide range of historic material, this contains probably the fullest and most widely-distributed body of 'printed' English Reformed worship in use today.

Now the testing of pragmatic theory with written liturgical texts has both advantages and disadvantages. In the case of 'authorised service data', conciliar endorsement and repeated common usage may be seen as a check on the potential 'fortuitousness' and idiosyncrasy which we mentioned earlier. Less helpfully, though, such 'official' liturgies can tell the analyst very little about the specific discourse contexts in which they might be used, because publication affords them an existence which is largely independent of local speech communities; the same is true of 'unauthorised' general service books. Since pragmaticians are distinguished precisely by their accounting *for* such contexts and communities, they are likely in such circumstances to assume or idealize them, and thereby to risk an over-abstract and impressionistic analysis. The same problem can arise - albeit to a lesser extent - in the case of 'local' texts, since no printed order can by itself offer a comprehensive anatomy of liturgy 'in performance'. Further still, we have already seen that the discourse of English Reformed worship is in any case substantially 'oral' and *extemporary* in character, and so yields no 'text' from which even some semblance of 'context' might be inferred. As Kelleher warns (1993: 302), and as language

theorists from Searle (1977) and Halliday (1985) to Derrida (1977) and Ricoeur (1981) have confirmed, significant differences thus mark the 'pragmatics' of spoken and written language. We shall pursue the *institutional* and *doctrinal* implications of these differences in 8.6.1, but from the analytical perspective they very much lay behind our decision to supplement purely textual data with material gathered from 'in situ' fieldwork. It is to this second main component of our corpus that we now turn.

#### 4.3.2 Field Data: Advent Sunday Survey

##### 4.3.2.1 Background

Since Reformed worship is so often 'non-prayer book' in character, it would be seriously misrepresented by any pragmatic study which did not pay attention to its more 'phonocentric' or 'extemporary' manifestations. This, however, presents the analyst with a number of problems. First, by their very nature 'oral' liturgies are less easily captured: if there is no formal text, utterances are liable to be 'lost in the air' just as soon as they are produced. It is for precisely this reason that major areas of English Reformed liturgical history - eg. the Radical Puritan tradition and Eighteenth Century Congregationalism - are bereft of primary sources. Admittedly, certain ritual formulae may be memorized even though they

are not written down. Broadly speaking, however, the Reformed church allows considerable room for speech innovation in worship, so that the precise *content* and *form* of discourse is likely to show marked variation from service to service - especially as compared with the 'logocentric' rites of Catholicism, Anglicanism or Eastern Orthodoxy. Robinson may have had 30% of URC informants describing their liturgy as 'mainly fixed' (1987: 17), but this leaves a significant majority worshipping in a more flexible or 'spontaneous' vein. Clearly, taking proper account of such worship means capturing it *as it happens*, and it is here that we are led 'into the field'.

Those analysing language as it is used in context have ultimately to move beyond written sources. Since Reformed liturgy has a bias towards orality, some form of situational recording needed to be undertaken in this case. Here once again, techniques commonly deployed in the ethnography of communication are applicable, and it is in her overview of such techniques that Muriel Saville-Troike (1989: 121-30) has identified five main methods of data collection in addition to 'introspection' and 'philology' (ie. the analysis of formal texts as just outlined). These five procedures are: a) video taping; b) audio taping; c) note-taking; d) interviewing and e) ethnosemantics.<sup>5</sup> Each of these approaches has its value,

---

5. Saville-Troike also mentions 'Etnomethodology/Interaction Analysis' as a data-collection procedure, although this may be seen from our point of view as a form of generalized *analysis* which is *consequent upon* the five methods we have identified.

but it is important to heed Saville-Troike's advice that the *extent* of their deployment must be determined by 'the type of data being collected, and the particular situation in which fieldwork is being conducted' (1989:117). What is more, the analyst will often benefit from commanding 'a repertoire of methods from which to select according to the occasion' (1989: 117). Now clearly, *our* methodological repertoire has been determined by the 'occasion' and 'particular situation' of contemporary English Reformed worship, and before considering the shape of this repertoire it will be appropriate to survey the specific field to which it has been applied.

#### 4.3.2.2. Determining the data field

The services on which our field study focussed were 'contemporary' for the obvious reason that we could not regress into the past and conduct 'in situ' recordings of worship that was over and done with. Furthermore, given the aforementioned diversity of English Reformed liturgy, this field study was compelled to reflect various patterns of tradition, churchmanship, theology and spirituality at work in different congregations.

It was with these considerations in mind that we chose to concentrate on worship in the United Reformed Church (URC). Although there are several church 'parties' and smaller denominations in England who would claim a Reformed

heritage, the URC is most extensively and directly linked with this tradition, having been formed in 1972 from a union of Congregational and Presbyterian churches, and having been joined in 1981 by a majority of Churches of Christ, whose main doctrinal heritage was also firmly Reformed (Thompson 1990: 119). Not least because of this multiple heritage, the URC is a broad church with a diverse liturgical character - something confirmed by Robinson in the study mentioned above (1987). Although it has some congregations in Wales and a handful in Scotland, the URC is largely English in composition. Properly scrutinised, there seems good reason to suppose that URC worship will be representative of the wide range of Reformed worship in England today.

#### 4.3.2.3. Analytical perspective

Before assessing the details of our fieldwork approach, one further point must be reiterated in relation to our singling out the United Reformed Church for special attention. This is that the author is himself an ordained URC Minister and as such, occupies the position of what Saville-Troike calls a Participant Observer (1989: 119). Participant observers are defined as those who are at once sufficiently immersed in a speech community to understand its structure, conventions and behaviour, and yet who are at the same time able to scrutinise that speech community using established analytical methods in order to draw

reasonably dispassionate conclusions. Saville-Troike comments that such participant observation is 'the most common method of collecting ethnographic data in any domain of culture' (1989: 119), and makes it clear that within this approach 'a high level of linguistic as well as cultural competence is a *sine qua non* for successful fieldwork' (1989: 120). While we stress again that this study does not aim to be a full-blown ethnography of church service communication in the style of Enninger & Raith (1982), these particular comments are surely pertinent to our own undertaking. Certainly, our personal experience of Reformed liturgical discourse is likely to prove less purely anecdotal when set in relation to 'natural data' gathered under controlled conditions in carefully-selected contexts. Then again, if 'raw fieldwork' can be interpreted by one who is 'linguistically and culturally competent', it is likely to contribute more fruitfully to any wider theoretical and doxological conclusions which might be proposed. Admittedly, being a Participant Observer in one's own ecclesial culture can present pitfalls stemming from over-familiarity with certain 'patterns or practices'; likewise, one may 'choose to ask questions of people compatible with [oneself] and thereby bias the study', or otherwise 'lose the necessary balance between detachment and involvement' (Kelleher 1993: 295-97). Ultimately, though, we decided that our dual roles as practitioner and researcher should, with suitable self-assessment, prove complementary rather than contradictory.



#### 4.3.2.4. Selection of participant congregations

One area in which our participant-observer knowledge proved helpful was in the *selection* of congregations for scrutiny. Clearly, for data to be representative of English Reformed worship as a whole, it had to reflect a suitable range of geographical locations, social settings, tradition, churchmanship and size. With this in mind, we chose 15 local churches whom we judged would together comprise such a range, and wrote asking them to participate in our fieldwork survey (see letter in Figure 2a).

One congregation could not take part and another failed to return sufficient data. Of the remaining thirteen who cooperated fully, ten were eventually chosen for closer analysis. This number was deemed sufficient to present a good cross-section of the United Reformed Church worship as it is practised today.

From Questionnaire data explained more fully in 4.3.2.6.2. below, it emerges that our intuitions about the diversity of congregations surveyed were largely borne out by the information they supplied on themselves. Helpful corroboration was also forthcoming from the results of a major church census on English Christianity carried out by the Marc Europe organization in 1989 and published two years later in a report written by Peter Brierly (1991). Since 77% of all the 1,681 English United Reformed Churches then in operation participated in this census, it provides a good check on the representativeness of our own field sample.

Figure 2a) Initial letter to 15 URC Churches requesting cooperation in Fieldwork Survey.

# KEYWORD UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

NOTTINGHAM ROAD, KEYWORD, NOTTINGHAM NG12 5FB

Minister:  
Rev. David Hilborn BA  
29 Maythorn Close  
West Bridgford  
Nottm. NG2 7TE  
Tel: Home Nottm.456147  
Church Plumtree 3662

Secretary:  
Mrs D. Cragg  
2 Rose Hill  
Keyworth  
Nottm. NG12 5GR  
Tel: Plumtree 3081

Treasurer:  
Mr J. Tinsley  
17 Main Street  
Keyworth  
Nottm. NG12 5AA  
Tel: Plumtree 2622

Pulpit Supply:  
Mr S. Hunter  
24 Nottingham Rd  
Keyworth  
Nottm. NG12 5FD  
Tel: Plumtree 5588

30th October, 1991

Dear

I am writing to request your help with my doctoral thesis. I am attempting to analyse the discourse of Reformed liturgy using insights drawn from modern contextual linguistics (or 'Pragmatics'). Although a good deal of my study is of a philosophical/theoretical nature, I want to include a certain amount of 'fieldwork'. With this in mind, I am attempting to gather a sample of around 10 URC services, all of which are to be tape-recorded on the same day - 1st December, 1991 (Advent Sunday). The sample is intended to reflect a broad range of worship-styles and I should be very grateful if you could participate.

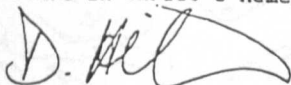
What I would like you to do is:

1. Take a recording of your main service on 1st December, using the cassette tape provided. Then return it to me as soon as possible in the stamped addressed envelope I have enclosed. I realise that you may already record your worship on a regular basis: in this case I would ask that you either copy this onto my tape, or send me your original so that I can copy it and send it back to you by return of post. If you have an amplification system, it is obviously best to take the recording using this; if not, most modern cassette machines will do an adequate job. If it is simply not feasible to organise any kind of recording, please let me know so that I can make alternative arrangements.
2. Complete the accompanying questionnaire and send it back with the tape. This is an important adjunct to the recording, and the more information you provide, the easier my task becomes. The 'Order of Service' section, in particular, requires as much detail as possible.

If you could include any specially printed material used during the service, this would be most useful. A photograph or drawing of your church's exterior would help, too, but is not essential.

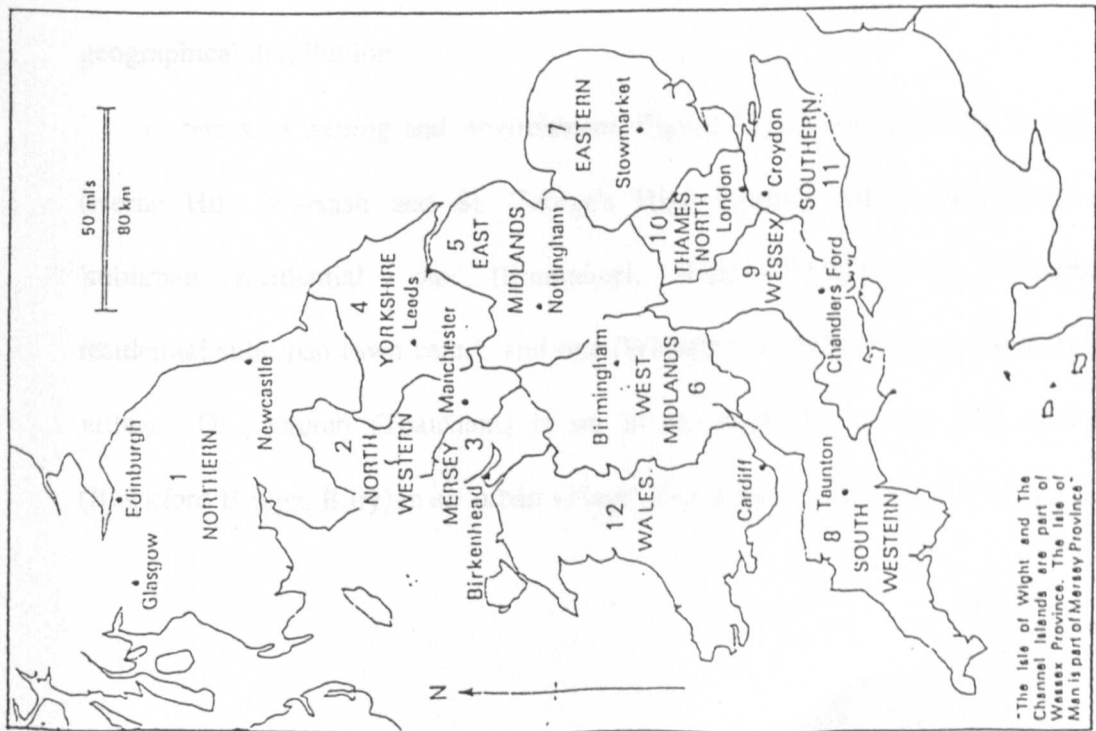
I know this all seems a lot to ask, but it is only a 'one-off', and you really will be helping to roll back the frontiers of human knowledge (well, sort of!).

Yours in Christ's name,

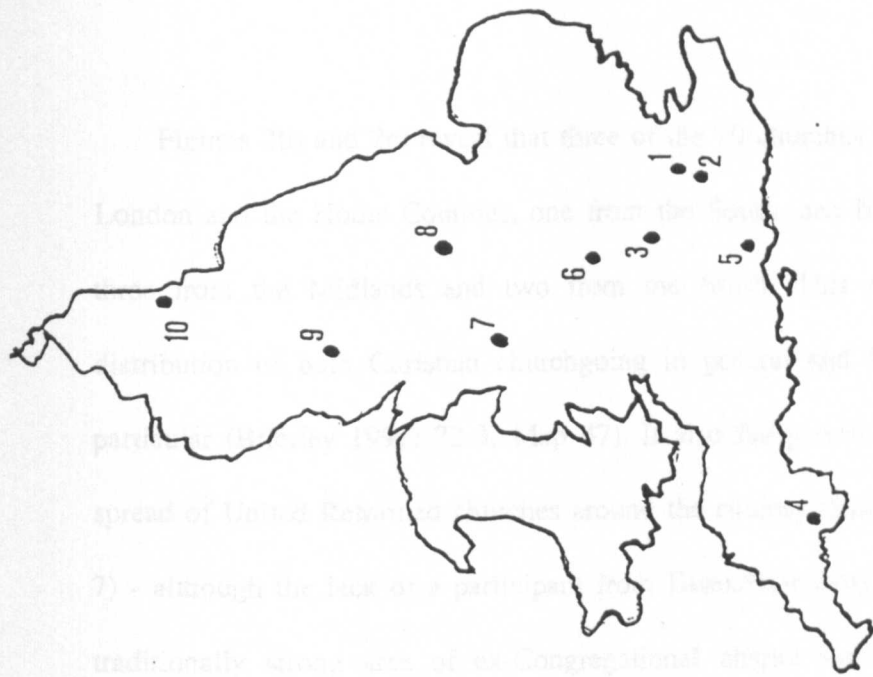


Rev. David Hilborn

# THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH PROVINCES



Figures 2b) & 2c) Maps (URC Provinces & Geographical Distribution of churches in survey



1. Home Hill United Reformed / Methodist Church, London.
2. Emmanuel United Reformed Church, West Wickham, Kent.
3. Thatcham United Reformed Church, Berkshire.
4. Derriford United Reformed Church, Devon.
5. Wansah United Reformed Church, Hampshire.
6. Wheatley United Reformed Church, Oxfordshire.
7. Woolley Cattle Community Church (United Reformed), Birmingham.
8. Dulwell United Reformed Church, Nottingham.
9. Blackford Bridge United Reformed Church, Ilbury (Greater Manchester)
10. St. George's United Reformed Church, High Heaton, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne

Figures 2b) and 2c) reveal that three of the 10 churches analysed come from London and the Home Counties, one from the South, one from the South West, three from the Midlands and two from the North. This mirrors the national distribution of both Christian churchgoing in general and Free churchgoing in particular (Brierley 1991: 72-3; Map 47). It also fairly well reflects the specific spread of United Reformed churches around the country (Brierley 1991: 72; Map 7) - although the lack of a participant from Essex/East Anglia does mean that a traditionally strong area of ex-Congregational chapel worship is omitted (cf. Brierley 1991: 68, Map 7). Seven of the 12 URC Provinces are represented, and even where more than one church is drawn from a single province (eg. Wessex), the fellowships in question vary significantly in their setting, composition and character. Indeed, we reckoned that our concern with differences of language-use in diverse worship contexts would more likely be served by a sample containing a good spread of *social*, *demographic* and *theological* profiles than by sheer geographical distribution.

In terms of *setting* and *environment*, Figure 2d) shows that three churches (Herne Hill, Warsash and St. George's High Heaton) define themselves as 'suburban residential', one (Emmanuel, West Wickham) as 'suburban residential/suburban town centre' and one (Wheatley) as 'suburban residential/rural village'. One church (Thatcham) is set in an 'expanded village' and another (Blackford Bridge, Bury) in an 'urban village'. One stands in an 'urban housing

Figure 2d) Digest of Information on Churches in Advent Sunday Survey

	NAME	DISTRICT	PROVINCE	SETTING	BUILDING DATE	AVGE. CONG.	AGE RANGE (%)				CHURCHMANSHIP*	MINISTER	COLLEGE	YR. ORDAINED	ADVENT SERVICE (11/12/91)		MINISTER'S DRESS
							-16	15-39	40-64	65+					COMMUNION?	THEME	
1.	Herne Hill	Bromley	Southern	Suburban res.	1950's	30+	6	14	43	36	Liberal	Janet Lovett	Mansfield Oxford	1990	N	Advent, 5th Anniversary, Gift Service	Cassock & cross
2.	Emmanuel, West Wickham	Bromley	Southern	Suburban town centre/res.	1929	210	38	17	17	29	Liberal	Derek Richmond	New, London	1951	Y	Advent	Cassock, gown & bands
3.	Thaicham	Reading & Oxford	Wessex	Expanded village	1804	100	30	20	25	25	Broad Evangelical	Daphne Williams	Mansfield Oxford	1989	Y	Advent	Cassock alb & cross
4.	Derriford	Cornwall & Plymouth	South West	Urban/outlying estate	1966	90	30	20	30	20	Mainstream Evangelical	Paul Snell	Northern Manchester	1981	Y	Advent, Church Anniversary	Minister: Suit & tie Preacher: Cassock, gown, clerical collar, hood, stole
5.	Wansash	Portsmouth	Wessex	Suburban res.	1889	67	25	20	40	15	Charismatic Evangelical	Miles Parkinson	New, London	1965	N	Not specified	Minister: Suit & tie Worship Leader: Casual
6.	Wheatley	Reading & Oxford	Wessex	Rural village/ Suburban res.	1797	50-60	15	15	40	20	Broad	Charles Brock	Mansfield, Oxford	1963	Y	Advent: 'People Look East'	Gown, bands, hood, cross
7.	Weoley Castle Community Church	Birmingham	West Mids.	Urban estate	1970	100	30	20	25	25	Liberal	Ernest Cruchley	New, London	1955	Y	Advent	Suit, clerical shirt & collar
8.	Bulwell	Notts.	East Mids.	Inner city	1970	100	30	25	15	30	Mainstream Evangelical	John Filsak	Northern, Manchester	1980	Y	Advent	Suit & tie
9.	Blackford Bridge	N.E. Manchester	North West	Urban village	1874/8	30	10	6	20	64	Broad	Bill Thomas	Mansfield, Oxford	1989	N	Advent	Cassock alb, clerical collar, cross
10.	St. George's High Heaton	Newcastle	Northern	Suburban res.	1938	180	33	25	14	28	Mainstream Evangelical	Alan Trafford	Westminster, Cambridge	1983	N	Bible Sunday: God Can Minister to us through the Scriptures	Cassock, gown, bands, clerical collar, stole

estate' (Weoley Castle), one serves an 'urban/outlying housing estate' (Derriford), and another is located in an 'inner city' district (Bulwell). These self-descriptions may, of course, diverge slightly from those which a sociologist might use, but they are sufficient for us to confirm that our chosen contexts of situation range in a pattern comparable to that charted by Brierley within the URC as a whole. Certainly, the Marc Europe census confirms that 'suburban' and 'urban fringe' environments are by far the most common for URC churches (33% of all social types), with 'separate towns' accommodating the next highest proportion (20%). 'Dormitory Rural' communities account for 12% of United Reformed congregations and 'Other Rural' settings for 16%. 'City Centre' and 'Inner City' congregations represent 10%, and 'Council Estate' churches 4%, of the total (Brierley 1991: 112). Although at first glance this may suggest that our survey is somewhat skewed towards urban and 'estate' fellowships at the expense of rural ones, it should be noted that that former have a far higher average attendance than the latter (97 and 60 respectively compared with 41), and that 'housing estate' in our Questionnaire was taken to include more than just council housing (cf. Brierley 1991: 114).

As for *congregational size* itself, the 1989 census revealed the average attendance at main URC Sunday services to be around 70 adults and 20 children<sup>6</sup>. This compares closely with an average across our survey of 98 attenders per church (73 adults and 25 children). Within the sample, one church claimed an average

---

6. This approximate figure is inferred from Brierley statistics for total Sunday adult attendance at all services, where those attending both morning and evening are counted twice (1991: 47), and from the information that in 1989, there were approx. 35,300 children attending URC churches, the total number of which in England was 1,681 (avge. 21 per church).

main service attendance over 200, one between 150 and 200, three around 100, four between 50 and 100, and one about 30. It should be recognised that this somewhat favours mid-sized congregations at the expense of the many small 'chapel' congregations of the Free Church in general (cf. Brierley 1991: 138-39) and the URC in particular (cf URC 1993/4).

*Age distribution* across the 10 congregations analysed here was reflective of that measured by Marc Eurpoe in the URC nationally (cf. Brierley 1991: 92). Slightly different age bands were used in the census, so exact comparisons are difficult. Nonetheless, our overall proportion of under 16's (25%) is close to its figure of 22% for under 15's, and the 29% of worshippers over 65 in our sample compares reasonably with the 35% tabulated by Brierley. The percentages of young adult and later middle aged attenders in our fellowships were also very close to the overall census statistic: our sample shows an overall average 16% of 16-39 year-olds as compared with the countrywide figure of (approx.) 18% for the URC, while our 27% of 40-64 year olds accords closely with Marc Eurpoe's 25% (approx.).

The *age of the church building* in which worship was set varied from 1797 (Wheatley) to 1970 (Weoley Castle and Bulwell). In between, three date from the Nineteenth Century, three from the first half of the Twentieth Century, and two from the 50's and 60's. Although this distribution is somewhat more 'modern' than Brierley's national pattern (1991: 180), which shows 26% of URC churches dating from after 1900 and 74% from before, it should be noted that his statistics relate to

the foundation of the *congregation*, which does not reflect any *modernisation* or *rebuilding* of premises - either on the original site or at another location. (The 'shell' of Bulwell URC is, for instance, much older than the internal architecture of its worship space, though it is the date of the latter which appears on the returned Questionnaire).

When surveyed, all churches in the sample had their own ordained Minister. Although this fails to reflect the fact that at any one time many URC churches are 'vacant pastorates' and thus rely on either lay or 'visiting' ministries, it was thought important that informants for the survey should be Ministers in pastoral charge, since it is they on whom the denomination places responsibility for 'the ministry of Word and Sacraments' (URC Manual: 6). Eight of these ministers were men and two women - a gender split which roughly mirrors that found in the ordained Ministry of the URC as a whole, where 14.5% of Ministers in pastoral charge are female<sup>7</sup>. The lengths of service of the Ministers in question varied from ordination in 1953 to ordination in 1990. In addition, the sample included Ministers trained in each one of the URC's and its forbears' main colleges during this period - that is, Mansfield College, Oxford, New College, London, Northern College, Manchester and Westminster College, Cambridge.

As for historic identity, seven of the fellowships analysed were Congregationalist by foundation, two Presbyterian and one an ex-Church of Christ. Of these one (Herne Hill) was united with the Methodist church. Again, these proportions bear out those displayed across the URC as whole (Slack 1978: 23-4).

---

7. This figure was confirmed to us by the URC Secretary for Ministries in a letter dated 16th June 1994.



Informants for each congregation were not asked to define their *churchmanship* in doctrinal terms, but using the classifications of the 1989 census, my own knowledge of them would lead me to designate three as 'Liberal', two as 'broad', one as 'broad evangelical', three as 'mainstream evangelical' and one as 'charismatic evangelical'. It is readily admitted that this distribution is skewed towards evangelicalism in its various forms, given that the total number of evangelical URC's represented only 12% of the United Reformed congregations surveyed by Marc Europe, as compared with 48% 'Liberal' and 22% 'Broad' (a further 15% described themselves as 'Low Church', which is fairly meaningless in this context, and 3% gave some other response (Brierley 1991: 164-5)). This may partly be attributed to the fact that I am myself an evangelical and therefore found it easiest to elicit the cooperation of evangelical Ministers and churches for my study. More positively, however, it can be emphasised that the distribution of theologies in my survey is very representative of the *broader range* of English Protestant and Free Church worship, where evangelicalism is much more of a force (Brierley 1991: 165). Thus although our *field* data comes exclusively from the URC, its evangelical bias can be justified by the fact that we are concerned *as a whole* with the broader sweep of Reformed church practice, and that both historically and currently, this is more evangelical than statistics for the URC alone might suggest.

Now just how far all or any of these 'background' factors can be seen to have affected the actual *language use* of the sampled congregations is precisely the issue

which will determine the importance of a field-based, as opposed to a purely introspective or text-restricted, liturgical pragmatics. It may be that the ethnographic methods we have outlined will add comparatively little to the linguistic-pragmatic reading of worship; but at least in contrast to most previous studies on church service language we can claim to have *tested* their usefulness, rather than either assuming or theorising the effect of 'context' on Christian ritual discourse. At least, too, it is clear that our sample has attempted consciously to minimise the potential 'arbitrariness' and 'contingency' of a corpus-based approach. What is more, where even those who *have* applied more inductive techniques have confined themselves to one service (Pike, Ferguson), one congregation (Crystal) or one homogenous 'sect' (Jules-Rosette, Zaretsky, Enninger & Raith), we are casting a comparatively wide net over a mainstream Christian constituency whose liturgical character is well-established and yet historically diverse (cf. Barkley 1966; Nichols 1968; Old 1984; Spinks 1984a; 1984b). In short, there is good reason to suppose that analysis of worship in this sample will enhance our project, and little or no reason to suppose that it could detract from it.

#### 4.3.2.5. Selection of services for analysis

Perhaps the most crucial decision after choice of congregations related to which of their many services should be subjected to analysis. The Reformed

Church has typically eschewed a strict 'liturgical calendar' with fixed lections and themes for every Sunday of the year. Although the ecumenical influence of the Joint Liturgical Group has led some URC congregations to observe set patterns of readings and topics, it is unlikely that the Biblical or thematic basis of worship would be uniform across several congregations on any but the most prominent Festival Days. While this heterogeneity may in itself be regarded as a key mark of Reformed identity (Old 1984: 57-85), it does not bear directly on our main focus of interest here, which is the interpersonal function of liturgical discourse *per se*, rather than the particular set of *ideas* such discourse may carry at any one time. Put another way, our primary interest is in the pragmatics, rather than the semantics, of worship. Indeed, precisely because of this, it was deemed that fieldwork should be such as to reduce *ideational* diversity to a minimum, the better to foreground comparisons and contrasts of *communicative action*. With this condition established, obvious candidates for a suitable date were identified as Christmas Day and Easter Day, Pentecost and Advent Sunday. Christmas Day was rejected, as URC services on this occasion frequently depart from a standard structure, often being much shorter than usual and omitting a sermon. Easter Day and Pentecost tend to have a more normal framework, but are still more liable than Advent Sunday to be celebrated in special, one-off services - services which, for instance, incorporate a eucharist 'out of sequence' (cf. Robinson 1987: 37). Despite certain distinctive features (such as the lighting of a festive candle) Advent Sunday is generally less 'marked' than other major festivals in the URC and as such, has more

in common with standard weekly worship. This is perhaps reflected in the fact that of the 10 Advent services which eventually constituted my fieldwork corpus, only six included Holy Communion, which is close to the average proportion of URC's identified by Robinson as celebrating the sacrament on *any* Sunday of the year (1987: 37)

#### 4.3.2.6 Data Collection Procedures

Having decided for the above reasons to concentrate on the first Sunday in Advent, the next important decision became how exactly to collect data from participating churches. Plainly, it was desirable as a form of 'control' to gather material from one particular Advent Sunday in one particular year - that is, more or less simultaneously. Obviously, this meant that we ourselves could not be present in at least 14 of the 15 services originally being scrutinized; indeed, to ensure equanimity and relative objectivity in this regard, we deliberately omitted worship in our own church from the survey. While this might be thought to disqualify us from the participant-observer status claimed earlier, it does so only in an immediate sense: as a URC clergyman, we are still well placed to relate this fieldwork data to our own knowledge of Reformed liturgy in general and Advent liturgies in particular; as a pragmatist, we were able to prepare and frame our analysis in such a way as to recover specifically that information which would be

of most relevance to a functional linguistic analysis.

The date of the survey was fixed as Advent Sunday, 1st December 1991. It was decided that discorsal data would be gathered only from the *main* act of worship held by any participating congregation on that day. In practice, this meant the morning service; many churches hold a 'second' Sunday service - usually in the evening - but this is typically much less well attended (cf. Brierley 1991: 49-51), and is often less reflective of the liturgical year.

\*

As has already been stated, the combination of data-gathering methods chosen by the analyst is crucial. In our case, of Saville-Troike's five options, only video recording was discounted. This was due not least to the operative and financial difficulties attending the installation of 15 cameras in 15 different churches on the same day, but also to the fact that, in contrast to the ethnographer or the anthropologist, the pragmatician is specifically interested in those features of context which bear particularly on *linguistic* communication. We concluded that these features of context could be retrieved sufficiently for our needs by the integration of: i) audio taping, ii) informant testing (through a kind of delegated 'note-taking' and written interview combined), and iii) ethnosemantic analysis. Hence, the letter sent to churches selected for our survey (Fig. 2a) above) carried instructions relating to each of these. Let us now examine them one by one.

#### 4.3.2.6.1 Audio Recording

Since pragmatics deals primarily with spoken communication, the case for audio analysis is strong. To some extent, speech contours, dialogical cues etc. can be captured by an 'on site' note-taker skilled in phonetics and intonation, but this could never hope to be as comprehensive or objective a method of recording as that based on microphones and tape cassettes. Besides, the need to cover 15 services more or less simultaneously made the latter approach the obvious choice: many congregations audio-tape their worship as a matter of course for the housebound, and so had the relevant equipment already in place, while even where a machine had to be specially installed, it required very little oversight once set running. Indeed, in view of its simplicity, it is perhaps surprising that sound recording has been used so little in pragmatic analyses of worship. Among shorter studies, only Pike's (1954 [1967]: 76 n2) and Crystal's (1976: 20) seem to have deployed it to assess a complete service - and then only in one location. On a more detailed level, Enninger and Raith (1982: 3) are very much in favour of the technique, but found it unwelcome in the Old Order Amish community they investigated.

Although sound recording can furnish the liturgical pragmatician with valuable 'real data', we should not suppose that this data will be *entirely* impartial. If it is true that even video recordings are 'limited in focus and scope to the cameraman's perception' (Saville-Trioce 1982: 121), then we must accept that

audio evidence will be affected by such factors as the positioning and range of microphones and the quality of reproduction. Since each church in our survey used its own equipment, ranging from sophisticated 'in house' systems to portable cassette players, such variation must be acknowledged and allowed for. Further still, we should note that the sound apparatus in most churches is oriented towards the front of the worship area, with microphones centred on pulpit and/or lectern. In addition, Ministers often wear a clip microphone on their clothing. All of this tends to shift the 'auditory focus' away from the congregation and towards individual addressors. However understandably, this may 'skew' our impression of the *overall* discourse pattern within a service. With all this in mind, the following remarks by Chafe are apt:

What is recorded by a tape recorder is not the whole story. In fact, for a naïve speaker or hearer, there may be little or no consciousness of these sounds themselves. It is the message or the interaction that is apprehended and remembered. This is not to say that the tape recorded sounds are not a rich source of data: it is only to say that there is much more to language - its content and the goals of its speakers - that tape recorders can only indirectly capture. (Chafe 1986: 216)

Given the impracticability of video for our fieldwork, alternative ways of assembling the *non-oral* information which Chafe emphasises had to be found. It was here that informant-testing and ethnosemantics came to the fore.

#### 2.3.2.6.2 Informant Testing: Questionnaire

The process we have called 'informant-testing' represented a combination of Saville-Troike's 'note-taking' and 'interviewing' procedures. In the Advent Sunday survey, it took the form of a detailed questionnaire sent to the Minister of each participating congregation. Data was requested at both a diachronic and synchronic level: this is to say, questions related to both 'historic' or 'general' details of the church's life such as its age, social profile, average attendance and internal shape, as well as to aspects of the particular service under scrutiny - time, duration, specific theme, ministerial attire etc.. Questions were worded and selected in such a way as to yield only that contextual data which might have some significant bearing on the *discourse* of worship: there was no attempt to construct a complete or exhaustive 'frame' for each congregation (cf. Minsky 1977) - rather, the aim of the questionnaires was to support and illuminate the primary material recorded on tape. The results from these questionnaires are reproduced as 'background information' for respective churches in Appendix 4.

#### 2.3.2.6.3 Ethnosemantic Analysis: Service Order Chart

Accompanying the tape recordings and questionnaire was a third analytical tool - one whose purpose was to ascertain not so much the overall



'context of situation' in each case, but rather the various 'contexts of utterance' which were in play at different phases of the service. Now while liturgists or sociolinguists would typically settle at imposing *their own* taxonomy on such intradiscoursal phases and contexts, ethnosemantic analysis aims to discover how the members of local speech communities *themselves* distinguish different blocks of linguistic communication. In Saville-Troike's terms, the 'ultimate goal' of such analysis is therefore 'an *emic* account of the data, in terms of the categories which are meaningful to members of the speech community under study'; an *etic* account in terms of a priori categories is a useful preliminary grid for reference and for comparison purposes, 'but is usually not the ultimate goal of description' (1989: 130).

In our case, the *a priori* 'grid' for utterance-contexts proposed five main elements. From a technical point of view, these related respectively to: the identity of different utterances or liturgical portions; the status and role of interlocutors; the derivation or 'antecedence' of discourse; proxemic factors, and kinesic factors.

Within the survey as distributed, these were described and presented as in Figure 4.

<u>SECTION OF SERVICE</u>	<u>SPEAKER(S)/ SINGER(S)</u>	<u>PROVENANCE</u>	<u>POSITION AND GESTURE OF SPEAKER</u>	<u>STANCE OF CONG.</u>
eg.confession hymn, sermon	eg.minister, choir	Does this part derive from a set text, or is it exten- orary?	eg.pulpit, table; raised hands	eg. sitting standing

Figure 4. Service Order Chart for Advent Sunday Survey.

Ministerial respondents were asked to fill these five columns with as much salient information as possible, thereby providing an anatomy of each horizontal section or 'portion' which would reveal far more than the tapes could do on their own. The charts as completed for each church follow each transcript in turn in Appendix 4.

Clearly, such an ethnosemantic analysis must be seen as contributory to, rather than dominant within, our overall study. We have already emphasised that pragmatics has typically adopted a deductive rather than an inductive approach, and it is worth bearing in mind Susan Ervan Tripp's insistence that 'folk taxonomies' can vary even within the same speech community and in any case, can never be relied upon to account for *every possible* discourse category (Ervan Tripp 1978: 66). Our commitment to a catholic approach bears reiteration in this regard. Since we are attempting a pragmatic analysis of real social discourse, we cannot remain in the realm of pure theory; on the other hand, because we are looking to draw more general linguistic and theological conclusions, we cannot treat our data in the same way as might a thoroughgoing cultural relativist. Our fieldwork will serve critically to check, and even alter, hypotheses, but at least as much, it will be invoked to uphold generalised hypothetical tenets out of a conviction that not only liturgy, but discourse *per se*, is characterised by certain properties which arise from the *common* condition of humanity in relationship to God.

### 2.3.3. Transcription of Field Data

#### 2.3.3.1. General Principles

Given that a significant proportion of our study is committed to the use of original, 'in situ' field data, it is important to establish how such data should be represented and analysed 'on the page'. We have already discussed the methods of corpus *collection* used in our Advent Sunday survey; we must now consider how best to *transcribe* this data so that it might properly contribute to our testing of pragmatic-linguistic and doxological hypotheses. This, however, is a task which is far from straightforward. Insofar as we are engaged in 'socio-pragmatics', we face considerable difficulties when trying to define an appropriate set of transcription conventions. First, our focus on particular speech communities and 'real' discourses obliges us to develop a notation which presents context of culture, context of situation and context of utterance more specifically and more delicately than has been deemed necessary by most 'general pragmatic' and 'pragmalinguistic' studies. On the other hand, we have by now established that our requirements are not such as to necessitate the exhaustive socio-cultural descriptions associated with a full ethnography of communication.

As we have seen, most standard approaches to pragmatics are 'general' in their orientation. They begin with theoretical principles (eg. 'illocutionary force', 'direction of fit') and then offer imagined utterances by way of exemplification.

These utterances often form part of a 'dialogue', in which two (and rarely more than two) speakers are identified. Apart from such participant-labelling, little other contextual analysis is supplied - no doubt because the examples given are in the first place hypothetical and thus virtually context-free! (instances of this abound in Searle 1969, 1979; Cole and Morgan 1975; Searle, Kiefer and Bierwisch 1980; Leech 1983; Levinson 1983; Searle and Vanderveken 1985; Recanati 1988 and Blakemore 1992).

Once more, we might well note that all this seems odd in view of the fact that so many have defined pragmatics as precisely the study of language in relation to *context* (Searle 1969: 68; Gazdar 1979: 2; Levinson 1983: 21; Leech 1983: 13; Blakemore 1992: 5-9). Indeed, as we saw at the beginning of this chapter, even while themselves remaining analytically introspective, some have begun to suggest that pragmatics needs more seriously to explore the possibilities of natural-language corpora. Meanwhile, the minority who have *already* chosen to reassess pragmatic principles in the light of real data are charged with attempting a much fuller description of *non-verbal*, as well as of verbal, features. Any such attempt should, however, be guided by the kind of 'quantity control' articulated by Eleanor Ochs in her foundational paper on 'Transcription as Theory' (1979: 44): 'a transcript that is too detailed is difficult to follow and assess. A more useful transcript is a more selective one'. Put another way, we need to develop a transcription of our data which accords closely with our *purpose*. In this study, we have emphasised from the outset that our main interest is in the relation between language and people as

*language users* (cf. Morris, 1938: 6) or more particularly, between liturgical *discourses* and those who participate in them as *worshipping interlocutors*. In this sense, though we are concerned to present a study of liturgy as *communication*, our primary grounding in liturgical *discourse* (both written and transcribed) means that more generalised codifications of human interaction such as are found in the fields of ethnomethodology (cf. Goffman 1967, 1974; Lardner 1979) or psychology (cf. Sperber and Wilson 1986) will be of less immediate value than a descriptive framework which presents 'context' specifically as it is *observed* in relation to particular uses of language in our chosen 'field'.

#### 4.3.3.2. The 'turn' as a basic transcription unit: applications to liturgical discourse

While the prescription just given might appear to demand discourse analysis at the deep level pioneered by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975), it should be recognised that their system was developed especially with the classroom in mind, and that most adaptations of it have been applied to speech-events where 'speaker turns' have a comparably short, quick-changing, one-to-one character and where they are strongly foregrounded as a result - whether to casual conversation (Burton, 1978), doctor-patient interviews (Coulthard & Ashby, 1973), telephone talk (Schegloff, 1979) or Pinterian drama (Burton, 1980). With the same assumptions in mind, Ochs follows Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974: 700) when she posits the

'*speaker-turn*' as a 'basic unit' for discourse transcription. This is defined by her as an utterance bounded by either 'the utterance of another participant' or by a 'significant pause'(1979a: 63). She then argues that

as so much of pragmatics is concerned with conversational sequencing, it is crucial to use the concept of a turn at talk (or turn at behaving or acting). Many types of sequences, for example, adjacency pairs...(Sacks & Schegloff 1973) are based on turn units. For the analysis of such sequences as well as other areas of concern, our transcript ought to display turn units in a systematic manner. (1979a: 69)

Where liturgy is concerned, however, it is important to recognise that 'turn-taking' according to *both* of Ochs' criteria would appear to have a character which is markedly different from that displayed in the more commonly-studied discourse types just mentioned. Ferguson (1985) for example, has noted one very significant difference with respect to 'change of speaker'. Pointing out that most modern discourse analysis has been concerned with 'dyadic conversation', he observes that by contrast, 'a very common pattern of church service discourse...is the one-many dialog, in which a speaker addresses the whole group and receives a unison response'. He then goes on to note that a "'systematics of turn-taking" (Sacks et al 1974) in this context has yet to be developed', and asks 'How does the single speaker, who is almost always the initiator, assure the appropriate group response, delivered in the appropriate manner?'(1985: 209).

We shall address this question directly in Chapter 7, but it is pertinent to note here that such one-many sequencing has been reflected in several *written* service books of recent years, where **bold type** has been used to signal congregational

responses to Ministerial initiation (eg CELC 1980a; URC 1989).

While Ferguson's qualifications are certainly significant for many Christian traditions, he fails to recognise an even greater problem for a liturgical transcription based on turn-taking. This is to say, he overlooks the fact that in Reformed and other Non-conformist worship, it is possible for a single Minister to be the lone speaker (hymns notwithstanding) from the beginning of a service to its very end. Even where multiple voices *are* used (eg. for various readings and prayers), certain stretches of discourse - like sermons - may comprise monologues lasting half an hour or more. For our part, this raises the issue of how to set out our transcription of taped data in a typographically helpful way.

Even before its systematization by Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974), Ochs (1979: 46) observes that turns based on speaker-changes had been widely represented by *lines* 'placed below one another, as in dramatic script' - a pattern reflected clearly in the layout of most modern service books:

- |              |   |
|--------------|---|
| (1) MINISTER | We bless you from the house of the Lord |
| CONG.        | My God, I praise you                    |
| MINISTER     | Give thanks to the Lord for He is good  |
| CONG.        | For his love endures forever.           |

(URC 1989: 22).

This so-called 'top to bottom bias' in typography would seem to accord with intuitive notions of 'discourse flow' in adult conversation, where 'overwhelmingly we treat utterances as *contingent* on the behavioural history of an episode', where

'the contents of a speaker's turn are usually treated as in some way *relevant* to the immediately prior turn', where 'the expectation of the reader matches the expectation of adult speakers' and where 'inferences based on contingency are correct'. (Ochs, 1979: 46). All the same, Ochs demonstrates that *other* forms of talk - notably children's discourse - may not sustain so clear-cut a relevance norm, such that 'the reader of a script involving at least one child...has to suspend the expectation that sequentially expressed utterances are typically contingent' (1979: 74). As a result, she suggests with Bloom (1970, 1973) that in such cases, turns are better separated into parallel *columns* so that the reader must 'shift his eyes from one column to the other in following the evolution of the interaction' (1979: 74). In this way 'contingency across speakers' turns is not promoted by the transcript' and 'the assessment of pragmatic and semantic links becomes more a self-conscious process' (1979: 48):

- |     |   |                                |
|-----|---|--------------------------------|
| (2) | MINISTER                                      | BOY                            |
| 1.  | what does Advent mean, do you know?           | it's countdown to<br>Christmas |
| 2.  | it's countdown to Christmas, that's<br>right. |                                |
- (Based on data from Advent Sunday service at Derriford (Church 4))

Though this style of analysis doubtless has its place, we must emphasise again that the 'change of speaker' criterion for turns is typically not as significant in liturgy as it is in conversation - whether adults' or children's. Because they are often



scripted or in some other way prefabricated, individual turns in worship are frequently so lengthy and formulaic as to render any notion of 'parallel columns' redundant. Moreover, although Ferguson's recognition of the Priest/Minister as 'Initiator' is basically sound, this 'utterance event role' (Levinson 1988) may not be as fixed as it is for the classroom teacher or more generally, for the adult in adult-child interaction. A lay reader of Scripture, for instance, might temporarily assume such a status when concluding a lection thus:

- (3)           READER:           This is the Word of the Lord  
                   CONG.:           **Thanks be to God**

Likewise, a member of the congregation may take the lead in 'free prayer' and expect her closing 'Amen' to elicit a corporate 'Amen' from her fellow-worshippers. Such role-shifting and 'multi-party talk' could, of course, play havoc with a fixed two-column transcription - especially one in which a single 'Initiator' or 'Discourse Controller' is assumed and in which his/her speech is placed on the left hand side in the transcription (cf. Ochs 1979: 50-51). Either the number of columns would have to be increased,

- (4)           MINISTER   READER   NOTICE-GIVER   INTERCESSOR..

or else each new column be retitled when a new interlocutor appears (5):

(5)	<u>INITIATOR</u>	<u>RESPONDENT</u>
	MINISTER:...	CONGREGATION...
	MINISTER:...	BAPTIZAND'S PARENTS...
	READER:...	CONGREGATION...
	GLOSSOLALIAN:...	INTERPRETER...

Since it could clearly make the transcription 'difficult to follow' (Ochs 1979: 44), such a 'parallel column' approach is best avoided in our case. This, coupled with what has already been said about the relative infrequency of speaker-change in liturgy, would suggest that the vertical, 'dramatic' presentation of discourse, with new lines for new interlocutors, would best suit our material. Hence, this is the convention we have adopted in the transcriptions which are collected together in Appendix 3.

#### 4.3.3.3. 'Significant pausing' as a turn criterion: distinctive patterns in liturgical discourse

Having decided on a layout for turns based on speaker-change, we had still to determine how to present discourse *within* the individual contributions made by particular speakers. In this respect, it was important to remember that, at least in middle class Anglo cultures, turns are bounded not only by addressor-change, but also by 'significant pausing', and that for the main proponents of transcription theory, 'utterances separated by significant pauses should be placed on separate

lines' (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson 1974: 704; Ochs 1979: 69). As Ochs admits, 'what will count as a significant pause may vary situationally'. Having said this, she goes on to suggest that 'typically anything over 0.3 seconds counts as significant' (1979: 69). Furthermore, this guideline receives impressive empirical support in a fieldwork survey conducted by Brown, Currie and Kenworthy (1980: 47-75). Here, Edinburgh Scottish English (ESE) was analysed with a view to determining the way in which intonation patterns reflect the structuring of spoken discourse into manageable 'chunks' or 'units' of meaning. Of particular relevance for *our* analysis of Reformed liturgy is the fact that Brown *et al*'s research involved both the reading of written texts *and* more spontaneous speech - a combination which typifies worship in the Reformed tradition. Their hypothesis is introduced by their stating that they 'would like to regard the tone group as the realisation of a chunk of information. If the speaker is speaking fluently, tone groups will usually have syntactic coherence, in the sense that items within the tone group must be interpreted with respect to each other...'.

Now the 'tone group' is widely acknowledged as a fundamental unit of speech analysis, and there is general assent among linguists that its defining feature is *pitch movement*: this is to say, it is bounded by syllables which respectively lead up to and complete a change in pitch. Despite this basic consensus, however, Brown *et al.* (1980: 41) are right to note that more precise definition of the tone group has varied considerably - eg, between Halliday (1967), Crystal (1969) and Brazil, Coulthard & Johns (1980). We should also note in regard to the tone group that

while each of the analyses quoted above posits a firm correlation between phonology and *meaning* as realised by semantic/syntactic structure, Brown et al. show from their data that in *unscripted* speech, this correlation can often break down: 'if the speaker is under pressure, having difficulty working out just what he wants to say, or having difficulty in selecting the ideal lexical item, he will often speak in spasms...where syntactic and semantic structure is interrupted by pause or pitch phenomena or both' (1980: 44). Hence, they report that 'in many cases we found that syntactic or semantic criteria would not enable us to make a principled decision as to where to assign a tone group boundary' (1980: 42).

In attempting to resolve these difficulties, Brown *et al* suggest that it is neither 'practical nor profitable to argue about which bits in [our] problem examples are or are not tone groups' (1980: 46). Rather, they try to construct a model which will 'predict the chunking of speech into units, taking into account constituent structure (Crystal 1975) and topic-structure (Dahl 1976)' (1980: 46). While admitting that this model is tentative, they argue forcefully for the soundness of its essential criterion, which is *not* the tone group, but the '*pause-defined unit*':

...in read texts a syntactic boundary usually coincides with an intonation boundary and often coincides with a pause. In non-fluent spontaneous speech it is very common to find these boundaries not coinciding. This may occur for many reasons - because the speaker is having planning difficulties, because he thinks his interlocutor may jump in and take away his turn, because he wants to create a special effect.

*The one reliable signal that we observe in spontaneous speech is 'pause'. This can be relied on to occur frequently, we can readily identify it instrumentally, and instrumental readings relate very closely to perceived pauses.* (Brown *et al.*, 1980: 47)

In the sample of ESE spontaneous speech they analyse, Brown *et al.* make a further crucial observation. This is to say that they identify a strong correlation between the *length* of pauses and the function they perform in the structuring of communication. Hence, pauses lasting between 1 and 2 seconds are largely identified as 'Topic Pauses', operating semantically to introduce 'new information'. Pauses of 0.6-0.87 seconds tend to signify 'intonation contours' and 'changes of pitch', while pauses under 0.38 seconds are characterised as 'Search Pauses', in which the speaker attempts to grasp an appropriate word or phrase with which to continue (1980: 68). Importantly, the shortest pause recorded by Brown *et al.* is 0.28 seconds, which closely concurs with Ochs's suggested 'significance minimum' of 0.3 seconds.

Now although our own transcription of church service data bore out Ochs' basic insight that pauses have considerable pragmatic significance, it soon became clear that the *lengths* of these pauses differed considerably in relation to their *contextual function*, as compared with those analysed in the non-ritual discourses studied by Brown *et al.* In general, we found that the average duration of Topic Pauses was much longer, pauses of 4 seconds or more being quite common in the marking of 'new information'. Likewise, pauses linked with intonation contours and pitch-changes remained 'unmarked' up to 2 seconds, while 'search pauses' were also typically much longer. Particularly within the uttering of prayers, it appeared that this extension of 'normal' pause lengths was linked to the presumption that church services are arenas of reflection and contemplation, designed to allow for greater

'thought between words' than does casual or quotidian discourse. In addition, because the ritual context ties utterances on specific 'subjects' so closely to specific actions, and because these actions are so often 'segmented' by silence (Pike 1954-60 [1967]), we found that topic pauses in particular were abnormally extended in the liturgical setting. These observations certainly lend weight to Crystal's argument (1976) that it is at the macro-phonological level that many liturgical modalities are distinguished from other forms of speech.

The upshot of all this was a decision to rescale functional pause-timings considerably upwards from those outlined by Brown *et al*, even while bearing in mind their basic pragmatic distinctions. Due to this, and due to the fact that pragmatics has no historical association with detailed phonetics (Levinson 1983: 269, 296; 373-74), it was considered adequate that pauses be measured to the nearest second rather than to the tenths or hundredths of seconds common in more specifically sound-focussed transcription. Thus lines *within* individual speakers' discourse were broken, as standard, between pitch-change/intonation pauses up to approximately 2 seconds, with pauses of between 2 and 4 seconds being marked in addition by three dots, and pauses of 4 seconds or more being given in actual figures to the nearest second. Liturgical 'search' or 'micro' pauses lasting up to 1 second (approx.) and not linked with intonation contouring or pitch movement were marked by two dots *within* a line. The following extract from the recording at Warsash (Church 5 in the survey) makes these pause transcription conventions clear:

- (6) MINISTER: Thank you Pete... ← Pause of 2-4 seconds  
 One may think o- on this..Sunday where er  
 there is so much flouting of the law going on and so much  
 Micro pause → er, desecrating..ah of the Lord's Day  
 it would be good to pray together ← Line break = pitch change/  
 let's pray intonation contour pause up to 2 seconds  
 ... (6.0).. ← Long pause (to nearest second)

The approach adopted here - as indeed in other aspects of our transcription - has close parallels with that essayed by Deborah Tannen in her influential study of repetition, dialogue and imagery in conversational discourse (Tannen 1989). In this text, Tannen has an appendix on transcription conventions which states: 'examples are presented in poetic lines rather than in prosaic blocks [because] I believe that this better captures their rhythm and makes them easier to read' (1989: 202). What Tannen means exactly by 'rhythm' is somewhat vague, though she does go on to say that her lines 'represent intonation units to capture in print the natural chunking achieved by a combination of intonation, prosody, pausing and verbal particles such as discourse and hesitation markers' (1989: 202). She cites Chafe (1986) in support of her approach, but here, too, the criteria for breaking lines represent a somewhat unsystematic mixture of phonological, psycholinguistic and semantic factors. Chafe argues on the basis of conversational research at Berkeley that discourse appears to divide naturally into 'certain minimal units' or 'chunks', and that these units/chunks have 'certain characteristic properties' (1986: 217). Having first described them as 'idea units' and then 'intonation units', Chafe (1986: 218) says that his definition bears comparison with the 'information units' of

Halliday (1967), the 'information blocks' of Grimes (1975), the 'tone units' of Crystal (1975) and others, and the 'idea units' of Kroll (1977). The eclecticism of Chafe's approach is underscored when he actually attempts to define the 'intonation unit', with simultaneous reference to prosody, cognitive science and Thematic Progression:

The notion I have in mind can be stated in the aphorism, 'one new concept per intonation unit...There are two elements of this notion that need to be discussed...what is meant by an 'intonation unit' and what is meant by 'new'...A typical intonation unit has a form that can be represented by three dots for a normal pause and two dots for an especially short one. Then there is a sequence of words ending in an intonational cadence of some kind. A final comma represents a clause-final pitch-contour, and a final period represents a sentence-final falling pitch. ... These intonation units emerged from convergent observations, but introspection has suggested to me, at least, that each of them might be the expression of a single 'focus of consciousness', or a small chunk of thought on which the speaker was focussing his or her attention at the time the intonation unit was produced. One thing that might make one feel more sure about this hypothesis is the psychological notion of short-term memory, the experimentally backed idea that people have a kind of mental buffer, or workspace, capable of holding something [of] the order of seven plus or minus two items (Miller 1956)...the general point is that a variety of experiments support the idea that our minds are restricted to focussing on small amounts of information for a limited period of time. It is a relatively small step to suppose that when we speak, we verbalize a series of such focusses, each of them as an intonation unit...

What then does it mean to say that an intonation unit can express no more than one concept that is 'new'. What does it mean to be 'new' in this sense? Introspection, observation and experimentation have all converged in this area. The issue is one that has occupied both linguists and psychologists of various schools (eg. Firbas, 1966; Haviland and Clark, 1974; Prince, 1981). One line of introspection has suggested that 'old' or 'given' information is that which is already present in the speaker's focal consciousness from long-term memory (Chafe, 1974, 1976).

The observation of real discourse has, I think, repeatedly confirmed the general nature of the given-new distinction, as well as its important role in assigning intonational peaks and valleys. (1986: 219).

Like others (eg. Pratt & Traugott, 1980: 285-87), Chafe goes on to distinguish between 'given' (ie. previously stated) information and 'accessible' or 'shared'



information (ie, that which is 'inferable from the immediate environment') - and without doubt, his conviction that the information structure of discourse is in some way related to intonation patterns enjoys widespread verification and assent (Brazil *et al* 1980: 73-82; Coulthard & Johns 1980: 73-82; Pratt & Traugott 1980: 286). The problem, however, is that Chafe fails to offer a satisfactory explanation of *how* exactly this connection operates, and here the aforementioned observations of Brown *et al.*, which point to certain discontinuities between intonational and semantico-syntactic boundaries in casual speech, should be remembered. They, in fact, 'do not recognise an unmarked information structure within pause-defined units' (1980: 29). Admittedly, we have already noted that in liturgy as in conversation, pauses of certain lengths *tend* to display topic-change, but this should not be mistaken for a hard and fast relation to semantic or syntactic patterning. Tannen begins by making this very point, but then presents symbols for such curiously hybrid phenomena as '*sentence final falling intonation*' and '*clause final intonation*' (1989: 202, cf. Chafe 1986: 218). In addition, Chafe's determination to uphold his 'one new concept per intonation unit' hypothesis forces him to deal rigidly with sometimes highly ambiguous 'information structures' (1986: 221-23). Further still, despite defining the intonation unit as pause-bounded, Chafe offers examples in which certain such units appear as lines which neither begin nor end with pause-notation (1986: 218, 220). Given these difficulties, we would surely be advised to avoid the very similar associations implied by Rosenberg's transcript layout, where sermon data is 'printed with one *formula* or *sentence* to a line to

...convey the sermon's *rhythm*' (1970a: 125). Indeed, we have consciously avoided imputing either grammatical or information-structural patterns to our delineation: not only would this have been potentially confusing; it lies in any case outside the domain of pragmatics as traditionally defined.

Though we accept that our 'lined' transcriptions are phonetically more 'naïve' than 'formal' (cf. Brown *et al* 1980: 48), and though a more clearly non-phonetic format might have been achieved by a plain prose layout (cf. Gumperz 1982a; Atkinson & Heritage 1984), we have maintained lines because even if it is not absolute, pause-defined units do clearly possess an important relation to divisions at other levels of spoken language in general and liturgical speech in particular. What is more, it is surely relevant in this regard that virtually all modern English service books have their main liturgical passages printed in 'verse' form. While it might be interesting to speculate on the criteria used to break lines in the latter case, various contemporary liturgical commissions are on record as having employed professional poets to help them in this task (Crystal 1965; Westlake 1969: 150). In discerning possible reasons for this, the following remarks by Raymond Chapman bear attention:

..liturgy is spoken language, which has been written down for various reasons - mainly to ease the memory and to ensure regularity in public worship...Our private reading [of it] should only be a preliminary to public recitation. New forms of worship will be accepted or rejected by their quality on the tongue and in the ears. (Chapman 1973: 595).

What is particularly remarkable about this modern practice of textual 'lineation' is that it is not as thoroughly rooted in history as might be imagined. Original Hebrew and Greek manuscripts of the Bible present solid prose blocks, and Reformation liturgies like Calvin's *Forme*, Knox's *Ordinal* and Cranmer's *Book of Common Prayer* have a consistent prose layout. Granted, the early Reformed churches were distinguished by their use of 'metrical' psalms, but these were exceptional as far as 'poetic' presentation was concerned. One can only speculate with Prins (1933) and Brook (1965) that the contours of Sixteenth Century English speech were sufficiently strong and uniform that the enunciation of liturgy did not need to be 'signalled' typographically in the way it is today.

Even if we admit that the presentation of 'liturgy as poetry' might aid its public 'performance', we must beware of making too literal a connection between each modality. As John Westlake has remarked:

Poetry is an especially exact form of literary composition. It is impossible to alter a single word of a successful poem without in some way altering its meaning. One cannot therefore have two versions of [the same text - one in prose and one in a poetic form] and expect that they will have the same meaning. (1969: 150)

In view of these potential confusions, it is worth re-emphasising that though our fundamental 'line-breaking' criterion of 'significant pausing' may make for a superficially 'poetic' transcript, and though liturgy may sometimes be 'poetic' in *style*, this should not be taken to imply a conviction that all liturgical discourse

belongs in the poetic register. Indeed, the following Chapters will show that our corpus points decisively away from such a view.

\*

We have already hinted that, despite certain definitional ambiguities, Tannen's system of transcript notation operates at roughly the same level required by our study. This is to say that it is concerned to record primary features of intonation and turn-taking without launching into either detailed prosodic annotation or intricate discourse analysis. To this extent, it resembles several recent studies of conversation from a broadly sociolinguistic perspective (eg. Jefferson 1977; Gumperz 1982a; Atkinson & Heritage 1984; Aston, 1988; Coupland, Giles & Wieman, 1991).

While these may be useful precedents, they nonetheless offer a confusing *diversity* of symbols and analytic markers: indeed, the same discourse phenomenon can be represented by anything up to four different notations - not least in that realm of pausing which we have just been discussing. As for *other* prosodic and situational features, it behoves us to sift from this sometimes bewildering diversity of conventions a system which will adequately support our analysis while avoiding 'excess' or 'unnecessary' information. Stressing once again that this is a thesis about the *pragmatics* of liturgical discourse rather than one about liturgical phonology, we have therefore chosen to identify only such major aspects of

intonation as might have a bearing on key communicative dynamics like illocutionary force, implicature and turn-progression. As we have said, very few general pragmaticians have paid much attention to prosodic factors when considering the interrelation of text and context. Levinson (1983: 269; 296; 373-74) makes passing reference to them, but apart from acknowledging Austin's obvious identification of 'phonetic acts' as the physical basis of speech acts (Leech 1983: 200; Davis, 1980: 37-40; Recanati 1988: 239-41), most simply ignore them (though see Oehrle 1981). As Brown *et al* (1980: 30) suggest, this could be to miss an important element of discourse interaction, even allowing that a *thoroughgoing* phonology might not be required.

The notation system which we have formulated for presentation of our fieldwork data is explained and shown in full at Appendix 3, but we comment on the main features below.

#### 4.3.3.4. Stress, volume, tone and pitch

Writing on the transcription of data for a contextual linguistic analysis of joke-telling, Auer (1992: 8) contends that a detailed representation of prosodic features is to be preferred to the more 'orthodox' and 'impressionistic' annotations of most sociolinguists - annotations in which 'final intonation contours' are represented purely by 'punctuation marks', stresses by 'underlining' and turn

overlaps by 'latching'. Then again, Auer's data-field is extremely small compared with our own, consisting as it does of just one joke told by one Italian-German bilingual child to another. It should be clear by now that ideally, we would commend a full-scale phonetic exegesis of liturgical speech as something which might tell us much about the different modalities associated with different Christian traditions. Both Prins (1933) and Brook (1965) have considered phonology in the *Book of Common Prayer* from a diachronic viewpoint, but a modern synchronic study on a broader basis is surely also in order. As we have seen, Crystal (1976) has sketched out briefly how such a study might proceed, while Enninger & Raith (1982) have offered a more thorough blueprint for such work - albeit in a single and highly sectarian church community. Nevertheless, the fact remains that none of these studies engage with *linguistic pragmatics* as linguists have commonly understood it. Recognising that we must set certain limits on our already potentially wide field of *liturgical* linguistic pragmatics, we thus have decided to forego comprehensive phonology in favour of the more typical transcriptive 'impressionism' of Gumperz (1982a), Tannen (1989) *et al.* This, we feel, is consistent both with our analytical aims and with the relatively large size of a corpus collected for comparative and corroborative purposes rather than for 'microscopic' exposition. It is to be hoped that in future, selected sections of the tapes we have gathered will be subjected to more rigorous phonetic scrutiny. For this study however, we have restricted ourselves to highlighting such intonation contours as relate to the natural 'chunking' and 'delineation' of liturgical discourse mentioned above, to vowel elongations and

glottally-stopped 'cut offs', to the stronger kind of stresses and emphases placed on particular syllables or whole words, to marked rises in volume and to unusual features of turn-taking such as simultaneous, overlapping or instantaneous contributions. This level of analysis is very similar to that endorsed by Levinson (1983: 369-70), and reproduced by Mey (1993: 233-34), for the purposes of a corpus-based pragmatics (again cf. Appendix 3).

#### 4.3.3.5. Orthography

Closely related to the issue of prosodic analysis is the problem of how to represent speech *orthographically*.

Following Sacks and Schegloff (1974), Ochs (1979: 61) contends that spelling should be modified so that it 'captures roughly the way in which a lexical item is pronounced versus the way it is written'. She then offers the examples of 'gonna, wanna, whazat, yah see' and 'lemme see it' to illustrate this strategy.

Although adopted by many analysts (Labov & Fanshell, 1977; Jefferson & Schenkin, 1977; Ryave, 1978; Gumperz et al. 1982b; Atkinson & Heritage, 1984), such re-spelling has been firmly criticized by Dennis Preston (1985: 328) for its tendency to 'denigrate the speaker so represented by making him appear boorish, uneducated, rustic, gangsterish, and so on...'. This, claims Preston, is particularly true of changes made to reflect dialect and/or accent. Through extensive testing of

informants, Preston shows that transcriptions using modified orthography can indeed reinforce class assumptions and lead to unhelpful prejudgements, such that 'the use of respellings by linguists, sociologists, anthropologists, folklorists, psychologists, and others who want authentic reports of spoken language with a minimum of phonetic detail may be seriously questioned' (1985: 335-36).

For our transcriptions, we have heeded Preston's critique and have worked almost wholly with standard spellings. In any case, it is also worth noting that the often ritualistic and sometimes scripted nature of worship discourse has been shown to effect distinct prosodic moderation and pronounciative standardisation (Crystal 1976). This suggests again that specialised orthography would be unnecessary in our case.

#### 4.3.3.6. Non-transcribed material: the omission of sermons, hymn texts and readings from analysis

As Ochs points out (1979: 44), the linguistic fieldworker is not obliged to transcribe every single feature of a sound recording: on the contrary, 'transcription is a selective process reflecting theoretical goals and definitions'. Having said this selectivity should not be random and implicit; 'the basis for the selective transcription should be clear'. In our case, we decided against full transcription of three major modes of discourse from the audio-taped material available to us: sermons, hymn texts and set readings from the Bible (or, in one



case, from a short story by Tolstoy).

The omission of readings is easily explained: they are already available in published form and, pronunciation aside, transcription would have added little to a linguistic-pragmatic appreciation of them. What is more, while the application of pragmatics to liturgical language is sparse, rather more material is available in the realm of Biblical exegesis - particularly from scholars versed in classical speech act theory (eg. Evans 1963; Aurelio 1977; Arens 1982; Du Plessis 1985; White *et al* 1988; Thiselton 1992: 283ff.).

As for hymn texts, not only are these virtually always found in books: they are 'performed' through singing, analysis of which would have taken us into musicological territory well beyond the borders of mainstream linguistic pragmatics. Although exhaustive liturgical 'ethnographies' would be compelled to include it (and see Enninger & Raith 1982: 23-35), hymnology is in our case best left to hymnologists - though there is a *doxological* caveat which attends this decision. In the last Chapter we showed how Wainwright has been criticized by contemporary Catholic liturgical theologians for putting *lex credendi* before *lex orandi*. He did subsequently point out in dialogue with Power, however, that British non-Conformity in general and his own Methodist tradition in particular has made hymns 'the verbal expressions of our worship and doctrine, inseparably fused', and that 'they are our "orthodoxy", in the sense both of right belief and of right praise' (1981: 449). While we note and endorse this point in regard to an English Reformed tradition which counts Isaac Watts among its alumni, it will not be seen

to detract from our conviction that *spoken* (as opposed to sung) English Reformed worship displays a distinctive character derived from an assumption that 'Christian truth' subsists pre-liturgically and propositionalistically rather than intra-liturgically and pragmatically.

Our decision to pass over sermon discourse perhaps requires rather more justification. After all, we have already underlined (3.4) that preaching has been regarded as the centrepiece of Reformed worship and doxology (Calvin 1556 [1960]: IV.1.v; Barth 1975 [1936]: 88ff.; von Allmen 1965: 142-47; Old 1984: 73-85; Buttrick 1987: 449-59, 1992: 289-91). We have also seen that it is partly due to their distinctive revival of, and emphasis upon the proclamation of the gospel, that Reformed churches have correspondingly tended to play down the eucharist - sometimes celebrating it on only a quarterly basis (Bradshaw 1986: 229).

Across the 10 tapes in our Advent Sunday survey, preaching occupies approximately 25% of all recorded material and is the speech-activity which most often crystallises the theme of the whole service. Having said all this, sermons can be hugely diverse and idiosyncratic: despite *doctrinally* representing the major 'enactment' of God's Word in worship, they in fact seek to accomplish this through a vast array of speech acts, styles, registers, genres, schemes, tropes, metaphors, analogies, jokes etc.. These can be varied to a great extent even within a single sermon; it then becomes very hard to characterise the act of 'preaching' in detailed linguistic-pragmatic terms. As von Allmen hints (1965: 142), the subject of 'homiletics' is in fact so broad-ranging that it tends to subsume other academic

disciplines well before they might be thought to subsume it. The Reformed homiletician David Buttrick, for instance, co-opts linguistic analysis liberally into his 'systematic' of preaching (1987: 173-238; 470-72), but can do so only in close association with narratology, rhetoric, communication theory, hermeneutics, Biblical criticism and dogmatics. While all these fields may be said to overlap within liturgical studies as a whole, they tend not to be so *concentratedly* or *frequently* interwoven elsewhere as they are in the sermon.

In this study we are most especially concerned with the effect of the ritual context of corporate worship on language used by, or on behalf of, the gathered congregation. Our own practitioner intuition, coupled with the evidence of our corpus, lead us to suggest that contemporary English Reformed sermon discourse is more readily 'transposed' to other, less ritualized settings than the more obviously ecclesial discourse of, say, the eucharistic prayer. Indeed, sermons or 'sermon-style' modalities are patient of a greater degree of what Crystal & Davy (1969: 148) call 'generalisability' than almost any other form of liturgical speech. They resurface not only at religious-secular interfaces like evangelistic rallies and media-broadcast 'thoughts for the day'; they can also appear in certain forms of political oratory (Gumperz (1982a: 187-203) and business talk (cf. the exhortatory 'sales lecture'). In particular, this adaptability seems attributable to the fact that the predetermination and integration of verbal with non-verbal action within sermons is comparatively low. Even communal prayer - which also takes place in several contexts beyond the church service proper - is usually still accompanied by a number of ritual formulae:

eg. an invitation such as 'Let us pray', the bowing of heads or kneeling, the closing of eyes and a responsive 'Amen'. As Terrence Tilley (1991: 63-7) has defined it, religious preaching is in this sense relatively 'institutionally free'. 'The sermon' as a *generic* entity may be cast as the 'sole' means by which the Reformed church is 'built up' and 'sanctified' (Calvin [1559] 1960: IV.1.5), but from a linguistic-pragmatic point of view, the *specific* structure, content and style of the discourses used by preachers in our corpus are so diverse as to make any intrinsic characterisation extremely difficult. Admittedly, Rosenberg (1970a) finds more common threads running through American Folk Preaching (chanting, rhythmic delivery, repetition, congregational interjection etc.); but the traditional bias of Reformed homiletic towards scriptural 'explanation' and against 'affective' linguistic strategising (or 'mere rhetoric' (cf. Old 1984: 77-8) means that for the most part, it has been made in the image of pedagogic registers which have themselves charted the stylistic contours of whichever Bible text is being expounded at the time. In subsequent chapters, we shall echo Wolterstorff (1992) in arguing that this, coupled with the sheer dominance of the 'expository paradigm' in Reformed liturgiology as a whole, has led to a 'didactic monologism' which has not only spread to *other* parts of worship, but which in doing so, has suffocated such more immediately 'eventful', 'performative' 'self-involving' and 'doxological' modes of speech-action as might contribute to the truly holistic practice of corporate praise (cf. Fenn 1982: 78ff.; Ladrière 1973; Jennings 1985; Hunsinger 1993). For now, we note that a dedicated 'pragmatics of preaching' would necessitate another study of

at least this size, and so undertake to fix our analytic focus on the language of these other, ostensibly 'non-sermonic' parts of the Reformed service.

4.3.3.7. Incorporating ethnosemantic data into transcripts: the segmentation of service discourse

As well as textualising the *speech* of the 10 Advent Sunday tapes, transcripts have also been used to show how this speech corresponds with the categories assigned to different parts of the sampled services by our Ministerial informants. These 'ethnosemantic' or 'metalingual' categories are reproduced in boxed block capitals above the actual transcription of their constituent discourse, and are accompanied by the information about their provenance also given in the 'service order chart'. In addition, the 'non-transcribed' portions described in the last section are similarly indicated, often with a summary of what was said:

(6)

**PRAYERS OF ADORATION (Extemporary):**

MINISTER

Let us pray.

...(6.0)...

Great and glorious God...

**PRAYERS OF CONFESSION** (Extemporary, except final section - from *Church Family Worship* No. 582)

Jesus, you give in a way we can never repay...

(AS3 - Thatcham: L. 13-23);

- (7) READER 2: This morning's epistle reading is taken from, Romans thirteen, verses eight to fourteen.

**READING: Isaiah 51; 4-11** (Good News Bible)

...21.0...

Amen.

**SERMON.** Preached by Minister. On theme of Advent, particularly in relation to judgement. Duration: 16 mins apprx.

(AS8 - Bulwell: L.250-53)

In the transcripts themselves, we have been very careful to keep the taxonomies used by our informants free from our own interpretative gloss. Very occasionally, we have inferred and added obvious factual detail (eg. that a section marked 'prayer' was actually a 'pre-sermon prayer'), and in cases where informants had clearly mis-remembered what occurred, we have omitted their mistake (eg. the Minister of Emmanuel, West Wickham indicates a *Sursum corda* where none appears on the recording).

#### 4.3.3.8. Extralinguistic features: the representation of context

So far, we have considered only how we should transcribe features relating directly to the mechanical production and 'folk' definition of worship discourse (turns, pauses, intonation, pronunciation, segmentation etc.). If we are engaged in pragmatics, however, we must also account for the 'relevant context' of this discourse (Levinson 1983: 24). In other words, our transcription should also record the wide range of *non-verbal* factors and activities which can be seen to have a bearing on the structure of liturgical communication.

We have already explained how our fieldwork survey attempted to recover 'relevant context' with a specially-designed questionnaire and 'service order chart' completed by each participating church and returned together with the audio tape of their service. As well as identifying speakers and providing a 'folk taxonomy' and provenance for different portions in the liturgy, these items also pinpointed key *spatial*, *interpersonal* and *kinesic* elements in the context of situation. In attempting to design a *transcript* which pays adequate attention to non-verbal context, it is clear that we shall have to combine data from our questionnaires and service order charts with the written representation of those tape recordings to which they correspond. Once again, however, we find that there is no clearly defined way of doing this. Ochs (1979: 51-61) notes that the integration of verbal and non-verbal behaviour in transcripts has taken numerous forms. Some, like Carter (1974) and Camioni (1977) use a continuous prose style, reporting action and quoting dialogue

rather as would a novelist. Others like Dore (1977) and Scollon (1976) attempt a sharper distinction of verbal and non-verbal behaviour by enclosing the latter in square brackets and positioning it to the *right* of the former. Others still reverse this order and place non-verbal action to the *left* of the discourse itself (Bloom, 1973; Bowerman, 1973). This, indeed, is Ochs's own preference. Yet further variation is provided by Greenfield & Smith (1976: 85), who offer non-verbal information *above* utterances, and by Tannen (1989: 58), who positions it underneath.

In our own transcriptions, we have found it most suitable to follow Greenfield & Smith: relevant non-verbal activities are thus normally indicated in square brackets above the discourse they accompany. In cases where informants themselves have defined certain extralinguistic activities as distinct 'segments' within the service, these are shown in the same way as verbal 'ethnosemantic' portions - that is, in boxed block capitals at the relevant point in the transcript. The appearance of the transcripts thus somewhat resembles the text design of most modern service books (compare (8) and (9) below):

- (8) MINISTER: Eat this bread and have fellowship with Christ in his suffering,  
and death.

[Eating of the bread]

The poured out wine,  
the blood of Christ,  
given for us.

**DISTRIBUTION OF WINE.** Wine handed by Minister to Elders, who then distribute it to members of the congregation as they sit in the pews (chairs). Organ interlude.

...(14.0)...



Let the blood of Christ flow in your veins,  
live his life..with him,  
resurrection life,  
beyond the power of death.

[Drinking of the wine]

(AS2 - Emmanuel, West Wickham: L.518-24).

(9)

#### 10. Thanksgiving and Sharing

...As of old you fed your people in the wilderness,  
so feed us now that we may live to your praise;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
*Amen.*

*The Minister breaks the bread saying:*

When Jesus had given thanks,  
he broke the bread and said...

(URC 1989: 27-8).

#### 4.4

#### From anatomy to operation

The implements for our analytical operation have been made ready. Methodologically, theoretically and empirically, we have done our anatomy, and are ready to perform 'exploratory surgery' on a live 'corpus' of liturgical language data. As we do so, we shall make incisions from four key linguistic-pragmatic angles. In Chapters 6, 7 and 8 we shall deal with liturgy from the perspectives of Implicature/Relevance; Discourse Pragmatics/Conversation Analysis, and Socio-Pragmatics. First though, we seek to examine our data using the tools and principles of speech act theory.

## PART II

### PRAGMATICS IN LITURGIOLOGICAL

### PRACTICE: THE FUNCTIONS OF

### REFORMED SERVICE DISCOURSE

## CHAPTER 5

### THE WORD PERFORMED: LITURGY AND SPEECH ACT THEORY

#### 5.1 Background

We saw in Chapter 2 that within the limited range of past pragmatic studies on liturgy, it is speech act analyses which have dominated. The reasons for this will become clear as we move on more thoroughly to consider both 'classical'<sup>1</sup> and later developments in speech act theory, and seek to relate them to our own integrated liturgic and doxological exposition of English Reformed church discourse. In the process, we shall realise not only that speech act analysis affords many fruitful insights into liturgical discourse functions, but also that it begs further questions - questions which have in their turn spurred the development of other pragmatic sub-disciplines, and which thus open the way to a broader and more contemporary 'pragmatics of liturgy' than has hitherto been produced.

---

1. 'Classical' speech act theory is a term used by Leech & Thomas (1990: 177) to describe the foundational work on speech acts done by Austin, and more particularly, the refinement of it made by Searle (1969).

## 5.2 Liturgy and the 'isolation of the performative'

In *How to Do Things with Words*, Austin develops his seminal ideas about language and meaning on the premiss that 'speaking is a kind of doing' (Martinich 1975a: 290). Initially, he questions the prevailing assumption of philosophers that 'the business of a 'statement' can only be to 'describe' some state of affairs, or to 'state some fact' which it must do 'either truly or falsely' (1962: 1). Against this 'descriptive fallacy', Austin points out that many utterances manage to play a crucial role in discourse without ostensibly 'describing' or 'reporting' anything: rather, such utterances are, or are part of, 'the doing of an action, which...would not *normally* be described as, or as 'just', saying something' (1962: 5). What is more, Austin demonstrates that many such utterances fall outside even those categories of ethical, emotional and metaphysical discourse which logical positivists had either dismissed as 'nonsensical' or else reduced to some empirically-verifiable residue (cf. Ayer [1936] 1971: 26-9; 47-61; 157-8; Devitt & Sterelny 1987: 189-90). Examples like 'I name this ship *x*' uttered at a launching ceremony; 'I give and bequeath my watch to *y*' written in a will, or 'I bet' voiced in undertaking a wager, are all clearly significant, even while being neither just representations of acts nor statements that acts are being done: indeed, for Austin, to utter such expressions was not to 'describe' action so much as 'to do it' (1962: 6).

It is from this starting-point that Austin proposes his key distinction between *performative utterances* or *performatives*, as that class of expressions whose very

articulation constitutes an 'act', and *constatives*, the role of which is to refer to or 'denote' particular verifiable phenomena (1962: 3).

Although the 'dynamic' of Austin's performative is more than simply lexical or grammatical, he does contend that it is most characteristically realised by certain linguistic constructions: this is to say, he sees it archetypally occurring in utterances which deploy verbs in the first person singular present indicative active<sup>2</sup>: 'I promise', 'I warn', 'I apologise' etc. (1962: 56). Furthermore, in order to discern whether such verbs are in fact being used performatively in a specific case, he suggests the word *hereby* be inserted before them: indeed, this *hereby test* seems to Austin a 'useful criterion that the utterance is performative' - even in those rarer instances where the subject is plural ('We hereby undertake'), the verb form passive ('You are hereby authorised') or the agent impersonal ('Notice is hereby given') (1962: 57).

Now on the face of it, this 'preliminary isolation' of the performative (1962: 4) seems to offer considerable encouragement to the student of liturgical language. At the most obvious level, Austin himself draws several examples from church worship, as well as from other ritual discourses such as those arising from court trials (19, 85) and sporting contests (77, 90). Indeed, he emphasises on several

---

2. As we shall see, this 'grammaticalization' of performatives was subsequently qualified by Austin as occurring mainly with 'explicit' performatives, and has even then been questioned (eg by Searle 1979: 8-12 and Leech 1983: 174-8). Austin himself allowed that verbless expressions like 'Out' in cricket (1962: 77) were also performative (although this is a bad example since the umpire is actually only obliged to raise an index finger to signal a batsman's dismissal!).

occasions that performatives are *particularly associated* with ceremonial or 'conventional' language (18-20, 36, 85). So, in Christian liturgy, he observes their use for acts of baptism (11, 24, 31, 35, 44), marriage (64, 84), confession (83), excommunication (155) and covenanting (157). Certainly, one of the characteristic features of liturgy is its 'performance' of specific duties: more often than not these duties are executed in accordance with some prescribed formula, and typically, these formulae are, by Austin's primary definition, 'performative'. Certainly, examples abound both in our corpus and in the URC *Service Book*:

- (1) MINISTER: I baptise you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of  
the Holy Spirit  
(AS 9: 170-1 (Based on URC 1989: 34))
- (2) MINISTER: I...pronounce them to be husband and wife in the name of God, Father,  
Son and Holy Spirit.  
(URC 1989: 56)
- (3) MODERATOR We ordain her to be a Minister in your church  
(URC 1989: 89)
- (4) MINISTER: We laud and magnify your glorious...name  
(AS 6: 484)
- (5) MINISTER: Lord God our heavenly Father  
we give you thanks  
for a:ll that you have given to us  
(AS 1: 165-7)

Now even on this basic level, one could begin to perceive some difference between examples (1) - (3) and examples (4) and (5). Whereas (1) - (3) seem very

*specifically* tied to the institution of the church, (4) and (5) seem more readily transferrable to other contexts. Moreover, while (1) - (3) appear to gain their validity first and foremost from the *official status* of the speaker rather than any emotional commitment s/he might have to the ceremony, (4) and (5) seem more overtly to depend on existential commitment. In order to account for these intuitive differentiations, we shall need to delve more deeply into the speech act framework.

### 5.3 Felicity conditions and rules of use in church worship

Having established the intrinsic 'conventionality' of performatives, Austin goes on to emphasise that this in turn makes them dependent not on 'truth-conditions' but rather, on a coalescence of 'appropriate circumstances' which would render them 'happy' or 'felicitous' (13-14). Thus, 'I name this ship *x*' relies for its effectiveness as a performative upon its relation to some identifiable launching ceremony, while the sentence 'I bequeath my watch to *y*' becomes 'active' as part of a legally-endorsed will. In the same way, 'I baptize you' is likely to be infelicitous unless uttered by a recognised Christian leader when either sprinkling or immersing a candidate for induction into the community of a church. Likewise 'I *AB* do take thee *CD* to be my lawful wedded wife' has no status in English law unless uttered in a registered building before a suitable authorised person and two witnesses

(URC 1989: 71). Specifically, Austin defines the *felicity conditions* attendant upon performatives as follows. First (A.1), that 'there must exist an accepted conventional procedure having a certain conventional effect, that procedure to include the uttering of certain words by certain persons in certain circumstances, and further (A.2) that 'the particular persons and circumstances in a given case must be appropriate for the invocation of the particular procedure invoked'. This procedure must in turn (B.1) 'be executed by all participants both correctly and (B.2) completely'. Furthermore, Austin also recognises a condition  $\Gamma$ .1 which holds that 'where, as often, the procedure is designed for use by persons having certain thoughts or feelings, or for the inauguration of certain consequential conduct on the part of any participant, then a person participating in and so invoking the procedure must in fact have those thoughts and feelings, and the participants must intend so to conduct themselves'. A final condition following from this ( $\Gamma$ .2) pertains inasmuch as the participants 'must actually so conduct themselves subsequently' (14-15).

Liturgy, of course, is most typically *defined* by its 'conventional procedures' and 'conventional effects'. Moreover, the special status of 'certain words' uttered by 'certain persons' in 'certain circumstances' is confirmed by the existence of numerous 'liturgical glossaries' explaining in some detail the proper form, function and purpose of various 'liturgical portions' within the Christian rite (eg. Cross & Livingstone 1983; J.G.Davies 1986a; Sansom 1990). Likewise, 'correct' and 'complete' performance of 'procedures' like a eucharist or ordination is of the very



essence of felicitous corporate worship. Furthermore, the necessity of shared 'thoughts and feelings' might well be related to that mutual 'faith' which, for Ladrière, 'impels' and 'endows' liturgical language with its 'characteristic performativity' (1973: 61, L.400-2). No doubt, as Ladrière also hints ((1973: 57, 1.235-8), the frequent use of first person plurals in worship - whether by the congregation as a whole or by the Minister on their behalf - suggests a strong mutuality of intent and commitment:

- (6) MINISTER: Jesus you give in a way we can never repay...  
Spirit,  
 you inspire us beyond our thinking,...  
 great and glorious God,  
 we praise and worship you...  
 (AS 3: 23-7)
- (7) MINISTER: Lift up your hearts  
 CONG.: We lift them up to the Lord  
 MINISTER: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God  
 CONG.: It is right to give our thanks and praise  
 (AS 6: 447-50. Sursum corda (cf. URC 1989: 15).
- (8) MINISTER: We realise our unworthiness to approach you O God,  
 in our own strength,  
 but we come...trusting in your strength...  
 (AS 2: 501-3)

Now Austin himself makes a significant distinction between his first four rules and the last two, pointing out that when conditions A.1 - B.2 are broken the speech act will actually fail or *misfire*, whereas when  $\Gamma$ .1 or  $\Gamma$ .2 are contravened, it will merely suffer *abuse* (16) and will take effect nonetheless. Hence, an atheist layperson may recite and so 'abuse' the prayer of confession at an American

Lutheran service without nullifying the act itself (cf. Rule Γ.1), but if the subsequent absolution is pronounced by anyone other than a ratified member of clergy, the ritual will 'misfire' (cf. Rule A.2) - a point made explicit in this case by an identificatory style disjunct:

- (9)                      As a called and ordained minister of the Church of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

(Inter-Lutheran Commission on Worship 1978: 77).

Significantly for our purposes, the Independent/Congregationalist strand of English Reformed ecclesiology has in fact somewhat *loosened* the links between 'certain words' and 'particular persons' in worship. Most obviously, this has roots in the move away from fixed rites to extemporary speech, but it also derives from a more protean theology of ministry based on the key Reformed principle of 'the priesthood of all believers' (Eastwood 1960). Thus, whereas Presbyterian churches have followed Calvin's Genevan model quite strictly in making both preaching and eucharistic celebration the exclusive preserve of the Minister, Congregationalists have been readier to encourage lay preaching and lay presidency, while many among the much smaller body of Churches of Christ have been completely lay-led (Nichols 1968: 102-3; Slack 1978: 32-3; Thompson 1980). Having said all this, though their worship has thus presented itself as more 'democratic' and less 'priestly' than that of Catholicism, Anglicanism or 'High Church' Protestantism, such

traditions have still usually set great store by 'ordaining' and 'licensing' specific members to specific sacral 'discourse roles', even if not imposing on them any set form of words. Hence, though this ordination and licensing has taken in a greater *diversity* of potential 'speaking offices' (e.g. 'reader', 'presiding elder', 'lay preacher' etc.), Austin's basic conception of 'appropriate persons' executing 'appropriate procedures' has held good. Not only this: for all its promotion of lay empowerment, English Congregationalism has *in reality* remained overwhelmingly attached to the norm of an ordained 'Minister of Word and Sacraments' leading its services (Micklem 1936: 254; Davies 1948: 222-31) - a norm reflected first, in the current URC's insistence that such Ministers be trained, set apart and commissioned particularly 'to conduct public worship, to preach the Word and to administer the Sacraments' (URC Manual: 6, 21), and second, by its policy that lay presidency should proceed only in matters of 'pastoral necessity' (Slack 1978: 32)<sup>3</sup>. Certainly, this norm is borne out by our own Advent Sunday Survey's comprising wholly 'Minister-led' acts of worship, even while showing numerous contributions from lay people within the services recorded.

---

2. This policy was confirmed at successive URC General Assemblies from 1987-91.

Now Austin's 'felicity conditions' on words, persons and procedures undergo significant revision and refinement in the work of Searle (1969: 66-7). Searle acknowledges the role of 'extra-linguistic institutions' in the regulation of Austin's 'performatives' and, echoing Dell Hymes ([1971] 1972), goes on to underline that for their enactment, 'the mastery of those rules which constitute linguistic competence by the speaker and hearer is not in general sufficient...In addition, there must exist an extra-linguistic institution and the speaker and hearer must occupy special places within this institution' (1979a: 18). What is more, alongside the law, private property and the state, Searle offers 'the church' as a typical example of such an institution (1979a: 18). At the same time, however, Searle substantially re-works Austin's schema of speech act conditions. In their place, he posits four basic *rules* (1969: 63-8).

The first of Searle's speech act rules is designated the *propositional content rule*. Like Austin, Searle recognises that a few performatives may have no discernible 'reference' at all, and are thus *devoid* of propositional content (1969: 30. 67). As examples, he offers exclamations like 'Hurrah' and 'Ouch', together with the 'phatic' discourse of greeting. Interestingly, our corpus contains parallels to all of these, even though they are hardly ever found written down in service books and have thus been virtually ignored in 'speech act' studies of worship. Particularly within the Charismatic service at Warsash (AS 5), we find numerous interjectory 'Hallelujah!'s (AS 5.182, 190-7, 267-70, 288) and 'Thankyou's' (5. 182-200, 216-9, 278). In addition, there is at least one audible passage of diverse but concurrent

glossolalic utterances (AS 5.269-70) - utterances which, even if they do have a 'hidden' propositional content, are left 'untranslated' as private idiolects and are thus ostensibly 'proposition-free'. As for greetings, these feature commonly as 'opening strategies' on the Advent Sunday tapes:

(10) MINISTER: [At communion table]  
 Good morning everybody  
 (AS 8.1)

(11) MINISTER: Good morning and welcome...  
 (AS 7.1)

(12) MINISTER: Good morning  
 (AS 10.1)

As we shall confirm at greater length in 7.5.3.2.2, these relatively 'phatic' introductions contrast with more traditionally propositional and theologically coded sacral greetings such as 'The Lord is here / His Spirit is with us' or 'The Lord be with you / and also with you'. Indeed, the aim seems almost to 'put people at their ease' rather than confronting them straight away with specifically Biblical or doctrinal 'information'.

Despite such examples, Searle maintains that the majority of utterances will contain *some* sort of propositional element, even though this cannot *in itself* guarantee the effectiveness of those utterances *qua* 'speech acts' (1969: 24ff.). In this sense, Ladrière is right when he perceives (1973: 53, l.105-6) the 'decisive point' in Searle's argument to be that 'a propositional act cannot occur in an isolated state' - although given the instances just cited, Ladrière exaggerates when he calls this same propositional act a '*necessary* adjunct' to the performance of a speech act (1973: 53, l.107, my emphasis). What is beyond doubt is that a paradigmatic Austinian performative like 'I baptise' clearly *refers* to some verifiable phenomenon (baptism), even while itself playing a part in the *constitution* and *institution* of that phenomenon as a specific ecclesial action in certain specific ecclesial contexts. Similarly, common liturgical utterances like 'we pray' (AS 1.218; 2.525; 4.678) or 'we ask' (AS 1.177; 4.60; 8.321) may contextually 'do what they say', but some *general concept* of 'praying' and 'asking' is still being denoted. What is more, such utterances cannot typically function on their own: prayer and asking must be *for* or *about* something, and that something requires 'naming' if the speech act is to be felicitous:

- (13) MINISTER: We pray for those whom we know,  
 who are sick or suffering.  
lonely or bereaved,...  
 out of work,  
confused.  
 ...(8.0)...

We ask that your healing hand may touch each one,  
that they may know your peace.

(AS 3.329-35)

- (14) PREACHER: (...) we pray now  
that the assurance that you are alive,  
the assurance that you are coming,  
may give us ...hope.

(AS 4.529-32)

This confirmation that speech acts may thus be simultaneously performative and constative is vital not only for the development of speech act theory, but also for the pragmatic exposition of liturgy; we shall return to it shortly.

Searle's second rule of language-use is dubbed the *preparatory rule*. Preparatory rules are defined by Searle as *contextual prerequisites* of the performance of a speech act (1969: 60-7). While this most immediately suggests a parallel with Austin's 'material' conditions A.1 and A.2, Searle also includes here that mutuality of *thought* which Austin reserved to his condition  $\Gamma$ .1. More recently, Leech & Thomas (1990: 185) have defined a 'context of knowledge' related to the shared cognition of participants, and as a professed intentionalist, Searle has often reiterated that those who engage in speech action must reach a requisite level of *understanding* about what they are doing if such speech action is to be effective (Searle 1977; 1983: 26ff., 200ff.). Similarly, and with particular relation to 'conventional' speech acts resembling those which characterise liturgy, Bach & Harnish maintain that apart from a few exceptions, such acts are 'nullified' if 'shown not to have been performed intentionally', and conclude that the effects

they bring about 'live by mutual belief and die by mutual belief' (1979: 118-9). Now as we progress, it will become clear not only that *liturgical* felicity proceeds despite - or even because of - considerable *variation* in the 'intents' held by different worshippers; it will also transpire that Austin's original distinction between 'misfires' and 'abuses' is actually more conducive to sacral discourse study than Searle and Bach & Harnish's more thoroughly mentalistic expositions (cf. Tilley 1991: 28 n2). For now, however, the main thrust of the preparatory rule can be seen to correlate quite closely with what makes church service language function as it should. So, for instance, the URC performative 'I declare you to be a Church Related Community Worker' (URC 1989: 96) would have as preparatory conditions: the proper ecclesiastical validity of both those commissioning (ie. District Council appointees) and the Worker being commissioned (as trained and appointed by the church); a correctly-observed service constituted by the District Council and presided at by the Provincial Moderator; and protagonists who do indeed *understand* what they are doing and saying. Furthermore, even while regular Sunday services may seek rather less obviously to confirm individual callings and 'intents', the presumption of a basic and proper 'common mind' is still clearly apparent:

(15) MINISTER:       great and glorious God,  
                              we come again to worship you

(AS 3.14-15)



- (16) MINISTER      Father as we come to you on this day we co:me to praise and worship,  
to glorify your name,

(AS 4.35-6)

- (17) MINISTER      We light the candle for ourselves,  
for the poor,  
and for everyone who longs for God to come...

(AS 7.30-2)

As well as making the preparatory rules of worship explicit, these examples also carry some suggestion of Searle's third speech act rule - namely the *sincerity rule*. Where the preparatory rule incorporates the shared 'thoughts' of Austin's condition  $\Gamma.1$ , this subsumes the same condition's emphasis on the appropriate mutual *feelings* of interlocutors. More exactly, it establishes that a speaker must genuinely intend that his speech should issue in such acts as it would conventionally bring about (1969: 60). The significance of such sincerity in worship seems plain. Indeed, Smith & McLendon (1972) infer from Austin and Searle's assumption of sincerity that the felicity of religious speech action will be subject to kindred '*affective conditions*'. Noting that 'almost everyone is ready to acknowledge that religious speech is affective, whatever else it may be', Smith & McClendon take the example of 'confessing one's faith' and propose that 'the regular and requisite affect belonging to such a confession as *G in the tradition of Judaism or Christianity at least* is humble or awed gratitude, or, what is no different, gratitude to God' (1972: 59). They then express this as follows:

1. Speaker ( $S$ ) has an affect ( $FG$ ) viz. awed gratitude, and conveys  $FG$  to  $H$  by means of the sentential act  $SG$ .

- 1.5. *H* takes  $\mathcal{S}$  to have *FG* and takes  $\mathcal{S}$  to have conveyed *FG* by means of *Sc*.
2.  $\mathcal{S}$  intends to use a convention ( $V_g$ ) for confessing and he intends *H* to understand (by his use) that he is using it.
3. *H* takes  $\mathcal{S}$  to have the intention specified in 2.

Clearly this kind of analysis moves us a long way from purely syntactic or semantic exposition, touching as it does on key issues of psycholinguistics, anthropological linguistics, psychology of religion and, most especially, on the theology of faith as it relates to the action of the divine Word in worship. These associations are confirmed by Thiselton (1992: 287-8), who echoes both Gill (1969: 33) and Martinich (1979a: 289) when suggesting that speech-act approaches to Christian discourse will necessarily 'include the dual dimensions of the ontological and the existential'. As we noted in 3.4, these are the same dimensions which Vincent (1979) saw seminally integrated in the work of Calvin, and which thereby suggest that Reformed doxology might be especially patient of speech act analysis. It is also worth recalling that it was Evans (1963) who perceptively found in Austin's work a new and positive acknowledgement of the logical connection between a man's utterances and his practical commitments, attitudes and feelings' (1963: 11). From the same viewpoint, when dealing particularly with liturgical language, Ladrière draws on Austin, Searle and Evans when proposing the interconnection of 'performativity' and 'faith' in sacral discourse (1973: 56, 1.186-8; 1984: 57).

Now doubtless liturgy *does* demand and assume a certain 'commitment' from

those who take part in it. At this most fundamental level, there can be little dispute that *lex credendi* precedes *lex orandi*: to argue otherwise would make the preceding utterances (15) - (17) not only abuse-ridden but nigh on absurd. Having said this, we must still look more closely at what 'sincerity' and 'faith' might actually *mean* in a liturgical context, and how - if at all - they might be related. As we do so, it becomes clear that the rendition of sincerity in terms of 'belief' by secular pragmaticians like Bach & Harnish is potentially confusing because their concern is purely with the psycho-dynamics of *communicating* and *acting*, and has nothing to do with *religious* belief - that is, 'belief' in the metaphysical or 'spiritual' sense. Vincent (1979: 153ff.), for one, fails to make this distinction clear, but Tilley is surely right to stress that the 'sincerity' demanded by Christian worship does *not* in fact have to begin with a fully-realised assent to credal doctrine:

Admittedly, "O God (if there be a God), save my soul (should I have a soul)" is not much of a prayer. But it can be a minimal prayer, perhaps a first exercise in a strange practice, a practice in which a person can develop an ability to pray more deeply. (1991: 62).

Once we thus begin to regard 'sincerity' as starting with assent to what Habermas (1979: 4) calls the *validity conditions* of liturgical *action*, rather than with the propositionally-defined *validity claims* associated with such action, we can begin more representatively to apply Searle's rule to the reality of ecclesiastical rite - a reality in which the spiritual fervour of participants may range from that proper to contemporary saints through pre-school infants and 'occasional' attenders at

baptisms, weddings and funerals, to thoroughly sceptical first-time visitors. It is with this rather more subtle analysis that Tilley's scenario comes into its own, and it is here too that *lex orandi* can be seen to mediate *lex credendi* to some extent - that the 'language-game' of liturgy appears to be 'learnt' by 'watching how others play' (or pray!), rather than immediately 'comprehended' by inferring and expressing the right 'intentions' (cf. Tilley 1991: 28 n2). It is worth underlining on this basis that 'a man's commitments, attitudes and feelings' - or what we might collectively term his 'faith' - is not simply a product of his own personal genius. Liturgy is characteristically a supreme instantiation of *corporate* faith - 'the faith of the church' - and as such, its expressions function performatively at a level which is more than purely parochial, contingent or 'micro-contextual'. Indeed, as S.J. Tambiah suggests (1979: 126), where these expressions are 'universalised', they become subject to increasing conceptualization and abstraction from their original intention and situation of utterance. One upshot of this is that they are accorded fixed interpretations and reformulated in 'constative' or 'propositional' form as *doctrine* - as *lex credendi* (cf. Mananzan 1974: 59-73). Having said this, there is also a clear reciprocity at work whereby dogmatic propositions, once established as such, will themselves 'regulate' the speech acts of church worship. In this sense, Jeffner is quite right to observe that 'performatives, when they function among religious men, have *theological theories as correctness conditions*' (1972: 93, my emphasis).

Now of course, there *are* occasions in worship where a more explicitly personal or 'cognitive' sincerity is demanded. John Knox's *Genevan Service Book*,

for example, foregrounds Words of Institution which include Paul's severe warning to individual communicants from 1 Cor 11:27:

- (18) MINISTER:       Therefore whosoever shall eat this bread and drink this cup unworthily, he shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord (Knox [1556] 1965: 121).

Similarly, the current United Reformed Church ordination service draws sincerity to the surface when putting the following question:

- (19) MODERATOR:   Are zeal for the glory of God, love for the Lord Jesus Christ and a desire for the salvation of the world, *so far as you know your own heart*, the chief motives which lead you into this ministry? (URC Manual: 11, my emphasis).

More commonly, however, the prerequisite of individual sincerity is diffused through the first person plural deictics mentioned earlier - some of which are uttered by the congregation *en masse*, but many more of which are spoken - more implicitly still - by the Minister on their behalf. As Leech & Thomas point out (1990: 177), there might be some debate about whether the speech act of *apologising* depends for its felicity on the mental and moral sincerity of the speaker or whether it is intrinsically 'self-verifying'; even so, there can be little question that the comparable sacral act of *confession* becomes pragmatically distanced from such criteria of personal intentionality - especially when, as most frequently in English Reformed worship, the Minister enunciates it 'by proxy':

(20) MINISTER: We hurt each other  
we are sorry for it

(AS 2.408)

(21) MINISTER: We confess,  
we open our hearts,  
and our lives  
to receive the forgiveness you /offer/,

(AS 7.502-5)

The main point here is surely that the *whole church* is confessing and that as Austin realised, the import of this corporate 'institutional' act will override the possibly flawed motives of any one participant. Much the same could be said of Ministerially-voiced 'credal discourse' like the following:

(22) MINISTER: Father we acknowledge that,  
everything we have received,  
you have given us

(AS 5.229-31)

(23) MINISTER: (...) We believe that [Christ] shall appear again,  
like the brightness of the sun

(AS 6. 531-2)

Although (22) appears more 'performative' and (23) more 'constative', the fact is that both *alike* express official doctrines 'brought along' to worship from the *lex credendi* of historic church dogma - the former in regard to the Providence of God and the latter in regard to Christ's Second Coming. Significantly, these types of utterance, together with more formal 'statements of faith' like the Apostles' and

Nicene creeds (URC 1989: 113-4) have become a focus for much doxological debate - debate which has very much reflected the issues of 'sincerity' we have been discussing. In his *magnum opus*, Wainwright (1980: 279ff.) considers Maurice Wiles' unconscious reiteration of Austin's 'institutional' gloss on performatives (eg. Wiles 1974: 1-19). Wiles argues for a clear distinction between 'devotional' and 'doctrinal' language, and suggests a willingness to retain in *worship* the language of incarnation and divinity in relation to Christ, even while his critical reason as a *theologian* compels him to reject such language. He does this on the ostensibly 'pragmatic' premiss that the two forms of 'religious talk' in question serve very different purposes - the former largely 'poetic' or affective, the latter principally 'evidential' or verificational. As Wainwright pertinently asks, the key question then becomes 'How is [Wiles'] liturgical 'poetry' *related* to his doctrinal/theological prose?' (1980: 279). Or put in Searlian terms: How is his sincerity as a 'rational' theologian linked to his sincerity as a 'devotional' worshipper?

One possible answer to such questions might be to say that in worship, an individual chooses to subjugate her own personal convictions to the received or institutionalised 'faith of the church', whereas outside worship, she is 'free' to express those convictions just as she wishes. In this scenario, the 'sincerity' of the church worshipper is subsumed by the established 'intentions' of official orthodoxy and orthopraxis, whereas the 'sincerity' of the individual Christian is mediated by the dictates of her own reason, conscience and 'faith'. If this seems at best disingenuous and at worst hypocritical, it is worth pointing out that a similar

tension between 'personal' and 'ecclesial' faith can be detected in certain areas of Reformed theology. As we have argued at length elsewhere (Hilborn 1991a, b), both Calvin himself and the Calvinists who followed him, placed great stress on individual salvation and personal faith. In several Reformed churches, tables have been 'fenced' - not just from unbelievers, but also from those who have not shared the 'particular' faith of a denomination or the 'strict' beliefs of a local fellowship (Calvin [1559] 1960: IV.12.5n8; Bromiley 1992: 227-8). At the same time, sacramental theology has been marked by a disavowal of the Donatist notion that a eucharist could be invalidated purely by 'insincere' administration or reception ([1559] 1960: IV.14.7ff.; Burkhardt 1992: 130-1), and has often been defined by its attachment to infant baptism - a practice in which 'faith' is understood *ecclesially* and *covenantally* rather than individually (Hilborn 1991a: 10-13; Barkley 1966: 7).

This tension between personal and institutional 'sincerity' marks not only a major theme in English Reformed liturgiology, with its characteristic attempts to balance 'freedom' and 'order' in worship (Davies 1948; Spinks 1984b); it also reflects that major division between 'psychologically-based' and 'sociologically-based' models of pragmatics which we reviewed in 2.3. As such, it is a tension which will recur at several subsequent points in our discussion.

Searle's fourth rule is rather more straightforward in its application to liturgical discourse. Termed the *essential rule*, it specifies what a speech act must conventionally 'count as'. Thus Searle (1969: 66-7) points out that a congratulatory performative will be felicitous if it 'counts as' an expression of pleasure by some



speaker (*s*) at some event (*E*) achieved by some hearer (*h*); an utterance such as 'I warn you' is 'happy' if it 'counts as' an undertaking by *s* that some *E* is not in *h*'s best interests, etc. There are strong links here with Austin's condition B.2, concerning the correct execution and 'uptake' of performatives (1962: 36; 117-8), and again the application to liturgy is clear. Consider, for example, this pre-baptismal utterance to the parents by the Minister at Blackford Bridge (Church 9 in our survey):

(24) MINISTER:      Let us hear then,  
                              in the presence of God  
                              and before us as witnesses,  
                              that you confess your faith in Christ,  
                              and promise to follow him.

(AS 9.102-6)

Here, it is an essential condition of the Minister's speech act that it must 'count as' both a request and a command that the couple addressed then each answer 'I do' to a series of questions regarding their intent to uphold basic Christian tenets and to bring their child up in a Christian manner. The parents cannot respond to the Minister's utterance in any other way, for to do so would be to render the ceremony 'misfired', or invalid, rather than simply 'abused'.

For our purposes, there have been helpful suggestions as to how Searle's four rules might be applied to liturgy by Jeffner (1972: 89-93), Smith & McClendon (1972: 56-62 (also McClendon & Smith 1975: 48-83); Eretescu (1973: 426-7)<sup>4</sup>, Ware

---

4. Eretescu's paper interprets 'Christening' in the wider social sense of 'naming', but her conclusions are still valid for the specifically ecclesiastical context of baptism.

(1981) and, most helpfully of all, by Martinich (1975a: 301-2, 1975b: 408-9).

Over and above Searle's four basic categories, Martinich posits a '*Non-identity*' Condition operating on the speech acts of six out of seven Roman Catholic sacraments. This is to say that in all but the eucharist, the *recipient* of the sacrament must be fully distinguished from the *administrator* of the sacrament: priests cannot baptise, confirm, absolve, anoint, ordain or marry *themselves*; they can only give themselves communion. The same condition is recognised by Eretescu in particular relation to Christening speech acts, and she adds that these are also subject to a '*Singularity*' Condition, whereby they should not be repeated. Interestingly, the issue of 're-baptism' has much exercised the URC in recent years, thanks to the growth of 'Baptistic' soteriologies in several of its more Charismatic and Evangelical congregations. Indeed, the insistence of many Baptist or baptist-style churches on believers' baptism regardless of what occurred in infancy is a salutary reminder that liturgical speech act conditions may vary from denomination to denomination. As it is, the URC has entertained a 'two-track' policy, giving equal weight to both forms of baptism, but has maintained Eretescu's 'Singularity Condition' by insisting that those baptised as infants should not be baptised 'again' as believing adults (URC Manual: 3-4; Hilborn 1991a, b).

Both Martinich and Jeffner infer from Austin's B.2 axiom crucial '*Status Conditions*' for liturgical performatives, reflecting the fact that they are often felicitous only when uttered by designated speakers with specific 'discourse roles'. Hence only priests can pronounce absolution in the second person or say the

*epiclesis* at an Anglican communion; only bishops can ordain Catholic clergy, and so on. As we have already noted, the URC reflects its more Independent forbears by imposing such Status Conditions less rigidly and less frequently, but there are still plenty of examples to cite: one does not *have* to be ordained to absolve or invoke the Spirit over the bread and wine, but Ministerial ordinations must be conducted by a Provincial Moderator (URC 1989: 85). Furthermore, newly-inducted Ministers can only be received into District Council through the speech action of those who already belong to that Council (URC 1989: 88). Technically, funerals and even baptisms can be conducted as URC services by lay people, but the assumption of the *Service Book* is that these will be presided over by 'the Minister'. Then again, the ordination of Elders can exceptionally be conducted by a lay person, but only if that lay person has been accorded the specific 'status' of Interim Moderator to a fellowship (URC 1989: 97).

Finally, Martinich pinpoints '*Material Conditions*' linked to those ritual *non-linguistic* actions which accompany certain religious performatives - eg. signing the cross or lighting a candle at a baptismal pronouncement, joining of a couple's hands at the declaration of marriage etc.. Significantly, Calvin was very wary of such 'kinesic' symbols, and saw most of them as Scripturally unwarranted. Thus, while he could justify the breaking of bread and pouring of wine from the gospel narratives of the Last Supper, he reacted violently to 'procession' and 'display' of the consecrated host, branding it nothing less than 'idolatry' ([1559] 1960: IV.17.37; McDonnell 1967: 122ff.).

Likewise, he counselled the removal of all

superfluous 'pomp' from the rite of baptism ([1559] 1960: IV.15.2), and even more famously, excised the imposition of hands from his Genevan ordination service of 1542, reasoning that *even though* this act *did* have Biblical authority (cf. I Timothy 4:14; I Peter 5:1-4), it had been distorted so much by Rome that to perpetuate it would risk 'scandal'. As the *Ecclesiastical Ordinances* had argued, it was thought 'better to abstain from it because of the infirmity of the times' (Maxwell [1931] 1965: 170 n10). Though Calvin later softened his line on this particular act ([1559] 1960: IV.3.16), and though he came to regard other Biblically-justifiable gestures such as kneeling for prayer as matters for local interpretation ([1559] 1960: IV.10.30), many of his followers were even more suspicious of their potential to detract from the true 'matter' of worship - that is, *linguistic* articulation of the Word of God. Knox, for example, is widely thought to have influenced the insertion into the 1552 BCP of a so-called 'Black Rubric' making it clear that kneeling to receive communion implied no 'real and essential' presence of Christ - that is, no 'adoration of the sacrament' (Reardon 1981: 259-60). Then again, many English Puritans did away with kneeling altogether (Davies 1948: 214), as well as abolishing all special 'symbolic' vestments (Maxwell [1931] 1965: 211) and frequently omitting the imposition of hands at ordinations (Davies 1948: 225-7).

Today in the URC, congregational kneeling remains highly unusual, and features in none of the service order charts returned by informants in our Advent Sunday Survey. Other specific gestural and 'visual' rituals are also rare, although the laying on of hands at ordinations is now standard, as is the joining of a couple's

hands in marriage (URC 1989: 56, 89). Also, under recent ecumenical influence, nine of the 10 churches in our corpus include a special 'Advent Candle' ceremony to symbolize the coming of Christ as God's 'Light to the World'. (Elsewhere, similar use of a candle has been introduced as an option at URC baptisms (URC 1989: 34)). As for vestments, these remain discretionary and are thus not a 'Material Condition' of valid speech acts in the URC in the same way that they are in the Churches of Rome, England and even Scotland (cf. Maxwell [1931] 1965: 213). Ministers are not bound by any 'canon law' to wear any particular garment, and this freedom is evidenced by the eschewal of vestments at Warsash (AS 5) and Bulwell (8), as well as by the varying degrees of formality adopted elsewhere, from a simple dog-collar at Weoley Castle (7) to full cassock, bands, hood and cross at Wheatley (6).

What emerges from all this is that, while speech act conditions and rules are somewhat less apparent in English Reformed worship than in other church traditions, this difference is only relative. For all its claims to 'freedom', felicitous English Reformed church discourse is still subject to 'regulation' - not only along the lines specified by Austin and Searle, but also in the 'extra' dimensions noted by Martinich and others in respect of more obviously 'ritualized' liturgical traditions. What is more, we could even go on to say that just as it has jettisoned various 'Material' Conditions in favour of an emphasis on purely 'Biblical' worship, so the English Reformed church has added - or at least reinforced - a *lex orandi* 'Scriptural Discourse Condition', related to the form and reference of the language

*itself*. If justified, this would once again challenge the dichotomy of constative/performative expression. It is to this dichotomy that we now turn.

#### 5.4 From Performative/Constative to Locution/Illocution/Perlocution: sense, reference, force and purpose in sacral speech

From what we have seen so far, it is hardly surprising that several attempts to apply Austin's work to religious language in general, and worship discourse in particular, have made much of his 'discovery' of the performative. Indeed, where, say, Ramsey was struggling in 1957 to cast God-talk in a logical-empiricist mould - addressing demands for 'descriptive factuality' and 'verification' in scriptural and doctrinal phrases - once Austin's lectures had been published, a way was open to invoke the 'performative' as a more positive paradigm with which to account for theological utterances. Thus as early as 1963, Evans could assert that 'performatives are important in religious language...both God's use of His 'Word' in creation, and men's use of their words in talk about God as creator, are 'performative' (1963: 27). Similarly, Ladrière's acquaintance with Evans (1966; 1967) led him to the confident announcement that

liturgical language...is not merely a verbal commentary on an action external to itself; in and of itself, it is action...In order, therefore, to express the operative (non-descriptive) nature of liturgical language, we may use the term 'performativity', as proposed by Austin. The problem with which we are faced is

one of determining the exact kind of performativity proper to liturgical language. (1973: 51-2, l. 15-53).

Now there is room for debate about exactly where Austin ends and Ladrière begins: as far as we are aware 'performativity' was not, in fact, Austin's word (though it is used by later pragmaticians like Recanati (1987)). Moreover, its appropriation by Ladrière at best elaborates what Austin himself wrote. Nonetheless, Ladrière's basic point is clear: the fundamental status of worship discourse is 'active' rather than 'denotative'; its words are used to 'do things' rather than just to 'say things' (cf. Austin 1962: 5).

At this level, Austin's constative/performative contrast can be seen as a necessary premise for the development of speech act theory, and there can be little doubting its potential for 'legitimizing' liturgical discourse beyond the confines of verificationism and predicate logic (cf. Leech & Thomas 1990: 176). Nevertheless, it is essential to realise that it was a contrast which was soon regarded by Austin himself as too crude a division of linguistic functions. Indeed, his refinement of it eventually leads to a *conflation* of both 'performatives' and 'constatives' into a more subtle schema - one which acknowledges that not only performatives, but *all* utterances, possess the quality of actions (1962: 90-3).

Firstly, in Lectures VI and VII of *How to Do Things with Words*, Austin moves towards the conclusion that what he originally presented as 'performatives' were in fact just 'primary', 'pure' or 'explicit' manifestations of the performative character of utterances in general. To bear this out, he shows how various

'performative verbs' might be supplied to demonstrate the speech-activity inherent in a whole range of expressions whose 'surface' forms are apparently non-performative. Thus, even a seemingly straightforward constative like 'the car is blue' could carry 'implicit' constructions such as 'I state that', 'I judge that', 'I maintain that', 'I assert that', 'I promise you that' etc. - each of which would fulfil his initially distinctive criteria for performatives (1962: 91). Likewise, an interrogative such as 'Where is the office?' might be rendered as 'I ask you to tell me where the office is'; an imperative like 'Go to my room' could be expressed as 'I order you to go to my room', and even a moodless sentence like the cricket umpire's 'Over' might be articulated as 'I declare that we have reached the end of the over'. Austin infers from all this that the defining criteria for performative language must derive neither from grammatical structure nor from a simple absence of descriptive meaning (1962: 91). Instead, at the mid-point of his argument (p.91), he proposes a 'reconsideration' of the senses in which 'to say something is to do something, or *in* saying something we do something, and even *by* saying something we do something' (1962: 94).

Austin's 'reconsideration' sees the constative/performative polarity superseded by an anatomy of speech action which is designed to account for the *full range* of linguistic utterances. Within this anatomy, the old constative/performative distinction 'no longer serves to characterise different *sorts* of utterances, but to reconstruct different *aspects* of *one and the same* utterance' (Wunderlich 1979a: 268, my italics). Crucially, Austin comes to realise (1962: 94-108) that a single



utterance might at the same time constitute *three kinds* of act.

The first speech act-type identified in Austin's refined schema is the *Locutionary Act* or *Locution*. This is the act of saying something. It includes as constituent elements: the utterance of certain noises (*phonetic act*), which are articulated as certain vocables or words within some lexico-grammatical (or for speech, intonational) system (*phatic act*), and which are used with a 'more or less definite' sense and reference (*rhetic act*) (95-6).

Austin's second act is the *Illocutionary Act* or *Illocution*, and it is this which has preoccupied subsequent speech act theorists most. The Illocutionary Act is the act performed *in* or *by virtue of* the locutionary act. For instance, on the Advent tape from High Heaton, the locutionary act of saying 'Lord God, we want to ask for your forgiveness' (AS 10.191) realises an illocutionary act of 'confession' (cf. Austin 1962: 99-100).

Finally, the *Perlocutionary Act* or *Perlocution* is defined by Austin as the act performed *in consequence* of what is said, in specific relation to its 'effects upon the feelings, thoughts or actions of the audience, or of the speaker, or of other persons' (101). For example, in using the locution 'I urge you to believe *x*' a preacher may produce the illocutionary act of 'strongly encouraging' a congregation towards some conviction; but s/he will have effected a suitable perlocutionary act only if, *by this locution and illocution*, the congregation are thus *persuaded of x*.

Now Austin underlines these distinctions with a number of illustrations. In addition to the saying/urging/persuading paradigm just cited, he posits that 'we can

distinguish the locutionary act 'He said that' from the illocutionary act 'He argued that' and the perlocutionary act 'He convinced me that'; similarly, telling someone (*P*) 'You can't do *x*' is locutionary; thereby 'protesting' against *P* doing *x* is illocutionary, and consequently 'stopping *P* from doing *x*' is perlocutionary.

Austin's speech act trichotomy is readily applied to the discourse of worship, but the use of language in *liturgy* confirms several complications within it. Some of these complications were envisaged by Austin himself; others have been highlighted by later pragmaticians. Let us now consider them in turn.

#### 5.4.1 Locutions v illocutions in worship

For Austin, although 'locutionary usage' had long formed the dominant focus of linguistic philosophy (1962: 100), and was obviously of significance to 'grammarians and phoneticians' (95), it failed even to throw light on his initial problem of 'the constative as opposed to the performative utterance' (98). More specifically, it would not yield necessary information about precisely *how* an utterance is being used on a particular occasion (99). Austin's confirmation that even the 'rhetic' aspect of locutions concerns the 'sense and reference' of expressions rather than their *force* (99-100) would appear to underline this. On the other hand, as Bach & Harnish have since observed (1979: 19-20), linking locutionary acts with sense and reference in this way still begs certain questions:

Unfortunately, there are two ways of taking [Austin's] phrase "with a certain sense and reference" and thus two ways of taking the notion of a rhetic (hence of a locutionary) act. On one reading, the phrase identifies the operative sense (and denotation) of expressions in case they are ambiguous; on the other it specifies what the speaker means and refers to by the expressions used. The latter is probably what Austin had in mind (pp.114-5, n.1). Even though he did not draw the distinction clearly, for Austin there is a major break between the phatic act and the rhetic act, in that specification of the former entails no specification of what the speaker meant, whereas the latter does. For one thing, identifying the operative sense (and attendant denotations) of the expressions in a sentence uttered does not guarantee that something was *said* rather than, say, recited. (1979: 19-20).

The distinction Bach & Harnish make here reiterates what has already emerged as a key issue in our quest for a 'liturgical pragmatics' - namely, the distinction between *intention* and *convention* in speech acts (cf. Strawson [1974] 1991). If locutions are indeed products of 'speaker-meaning', one must wonder how the 'sense/reference' or 'rhetic' component of *formulaic* or *corporately recited* liturgical locutions might be analysed. As we have seen, English Reformed worship functions particularly according to a model of what Ferguson (1985: 208) dubs 'semi-free texts'; this is to say, it combines extemporary discourse with more established uses of Biblical and liturgical language. Given that it would be desirable for the liturgical pragmatician to demonstrate both the *continuity* of and *differentiation between* locutions uttered *more* or *less* formulaically (cf. Tilley 1991), it might be possible to argue for a *cline* in which each was depicted as more or less 'generic' or 'specific' in character. As much as anything, it is far from easy to distinguish sharply between liturgical locutions which are 'said' (and thus cognitively 'meant') and those which are merely 'recited' by members of a congregation (and so 'meant' in the more general operative-denotative sense

'identified by Bach & Harnish'). This 'generic-specific continuum' is in fact upheld by Searle (1973). On his reckoning, however, once applied to the *rhetic* dimension of Austin's locutionary act, it should be clear that the continuum in question is more accurately understood as a representation of *illocutionary* rather than *locutionary* activity. For Searle, indeed, the distinction between locutions and illocutions is regarded as superfluous: since Austin made speaker-meaning a *rhetic* component of the locutionary act, Searle asserts that he was envisaging there a range of pragmatic indications (eg. as to whether the sentence conveyed is intended as a statement, question or command) - indications which are properly designated as elements of illocutionary force. It is for this reason that Searle makes 'propositional acts' part of illocutionary activity, rather than differentiating them sharply from it. Thus, whereas Austin (1962: 102) had drawn a substantive division between the locutionary act 'He said that' and the illocutionary act 'He argued that', Searle proposes that both must be treated as types of illocutionary action - the former simply a 'less precise' and more 'generic' version of the latter (1973: 149).

These refinements appear to square with evidence from our corpus. Returning to the relation between 'praying' and 'asking', it is clear that in illocutionary terms, (25) and (26) are just as 'intercessory' as (27) and (28) - even though the latter seem more particularly to signal their operation as such:

- (25) MINISTER: We pray for continuing success and hope in the Middle East process,  
(AS 2.574)
- (26) MINISTER: We pray for Pauline /Membury/,  
that Lord you would grant her your blessing and strength

(AS 4.690-1)

(27) MINISTER: [...] for those,  
who devote their lives,  
to the benefit of serving others,

...(4.0)...

and those who spend their time  
caring for our community.  
We ask that your blessing will be on each one

(AS 3.323-8)

(28) MINISTER: Lord we ask that you will come into the hearts of all men,

(AS 10.443)

Furthermore, Searle's suggestion of an 'overlap' or 'continuity' between locutionary and illocutionary meanings would seem to bear out what we said in 2.2.5 about liturgical-pragmatic 'contextualization'. Certainly, several liturgical 'locutions', by their very rhetic fixity, feature not only as *products* of institutionalised intentions, but also as genuine *conditioners* of ritual felicity, and so *in themselves* appear to 'bring about' a clearly 'pragmatic' force. As we have seen, certain service portions in some traditions are validated (or rendered 'happy') only when precise wordings (or in Austin's terms, *phemes* (1962: 97-8)) are used. In such cases, the 'text' significantly shapes the 'context', rather than being wholly dependent upon it for its contingent meaning. On this basis, Martinich (1975a: 301-2; 1975b: 408) goes so far as to identify a special category of *Locutionary Act Conditions* for institutional settings as a further addition to Austin and Searle's Conditions and Rules of Use. Later, Bach & Harnish refer in similar terms to 'locution-specific speech acts' (1979: 118). Citing the Catholic requirement that a

baptism be marked by a priest's saying 'I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit', Martinich comments that 'unlike non-institutional speech acts, which allow many different locutionary acts to count as the performance of a particular illocutionary act, institutional speech acts usually require a specific locutionary formula or give a choice among a select number of formulae'. As Martinich indicates, the use of such institutionalised formulae blurs the distinction between locutionary and illocutionary activity, since the phonetic/phatic/rhetic act of articulating their specified sounds, vocables, sense and reference is, *eo ipse*, commensurate with the act performed *in* doing so - whether that act be lawful church marriage, Roman christening or swearing a courtroom oath.

While all this may seem to validate Searle's basic assumption of locutions into illocutionary acts, certain more specific problems remain. First, as Recanati points out (1987: 248-54), a flaw opens up in Searle's argument when he goes on to tie Austin's 'locution' firmly to what he calls 'sentence-meaning', while associating illocutions specifically with 'utterance-meaning'. Indeed, while Austin held that the phatic element of a locutionary act clearly conveys sentence-meaning as the 'determinable' meaning of the pheme, he nevertheless portrayed the *rhetic* element of illocutions as consisting in the production of 'determinate' meaning - that is, meaning produced in the actual issuing of an *utterance*. In itself, this does not refute Searle's overriding contention that locutions carry illocutionary force and may thus be subsumed into illocutionary acts. Indeed, assignment of 'utterance meaning' to

the rhetic level of locutions might be said actually to strengthen this point, since the association of 'utterances' with 'illocutions' is axiomatic! Nevertheless, Searle's analysis does leave unanswered the question of just whether and how the illocutionary force of 'rhetic utterance acts' might differ from the illocutionary force of 'illocutionary utterance acts'. If this seems perplexing, a way through is offered by Strawson (1973). Like Bach & Hamish after him, Strawson recognises that there is a vital distinction to be drawn in Austin's locution, between the phonetic-phatic component and the rhetic component. Indeed, he proposes that Austin is properly read as suggesting not two, but three 'states' of illocutionary force - states which correspond closely to the articulation of propositional content. Maintaining the aforementioned link between rhetic acts and utterance-meaning, Strawson retracts sentence-meaning into Austin's 'phatic' component and argues that here both propositional content and illocutionary force exist in purely 'potential' states, being thus subject to a range of possible contextual 'specifications'. The rhetic level is distinguished from the phatic by the fact that propositional content is specified there, while at the illocutionary level specification applies not only to propositional content but also to illocutionary force as well. Most significantly of all, however, Strawson hypothesises an '*intermediate*' status for illocutionary force at the rhetic (or as he terms it, 'locutionary') level - that is, between mere 'potentiality' and complete 'determinateness'. This status is associated by Strawson with the sort of 'rough' pragmatic indications offered through syntactic structures - the verbal mood of an utterance being an obvious example (see Fig. 1 overleaf).

	LOCUTION			ILLOCUTION
Austin 1962	Phonetic Act	Phatic Act	Rhetic Act	
			(Locutionary Act in Strawson)	
Searle 1979a & 1973			Sentence Meaning	Utterance Meaning
			Generic Illoc. Force	Specific Illoc. Force
Strawson 1973		Sentence Meaning	Utterance Meaning	
		Potential Illoc. Force	'General' Illoc. Force	Specified Illoc. Force
		Potential Propositnl. Content	Specified Propositnl. Content	

Fig. 1. Distinctions between 'Locution' and 'Illocution'.



Now the relevance of these rather fine distinctions for our purposes is that they begin to approach the kind of taxonomic intricacy demanded by *liturgical* speech action. Rather than simply sub-dividing locutions and illocutions or even collapsing them into a continuum running from 'sentence-meaning' to 'utterance-meaning', the liturgical pragmatician needs a framework which recognises not only degrees of generality and specificity in sense, reference and force, but which also acknowledges that the *relative interplay between them* is crucially determinative of pragmatic meaning in the language of church worship. We can illustrate this by taking the baptismal formula quoted above, and tracing its use in the United Reformed Church, where an identical Locutionary Act Condition applies (cf. URC 1989: 34). While we might associate this formula with a virtual co-incidence of Strawson's phatic, locutionary and illocutionary action, there are in fact subtle dynamic variations and potential exceptions to be charted. Phatically, as a sentential 'type', we must analyse its propositional content as *determinable* rather than *determinate*, as *universal* and *generic* rather than as contextually specific - that is, simply as

(29)                      Some person *A* baptises some person *B*.

At the locutionary level - when encoded in the URC *Service Book* - the same formula will possess a more (though not yet totally) definite sense and reference:

the pronouns will carry greater deictic precision and there will be more distinct propositional content:

- (30) Some ordained Minister *M* baptises some sanctioned candidate *C* in some United Reformed Church.

In this case, the illocutionary force will be generically that of 'a church sacrament', but will still not be *distinctively* related to a particular act of worship at a particular time involving a particular clergyman and baptizand. Only at the *illocutionary* level will it be possible to assign definite referents and specific force to the words used. This, of course, is the level at which the Minister at Church 9 in our Advent Sunday Survey baptises the daughter of two of his adherents:

- (31) MINISTER: [...] Lucy Emily Routledge,  
I baptise you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit
- (AS 9.170-1)
- Rev. D.W. Thomas baptises Lucy Emily Routledge at Blackford Bridge United Reformed Church on 1/12/91. Illocutionary Force: Sacrament of Baptism.

Stripping down this analytic process as we have just done enables us to realise that while there may often be a *correspondence* between phatic, locutionary and illocutionary acts, and while these may be 'iconic' in relation to propositional content and illocutionary force, this need not always be the case. The baptismal pheme need not always be addressed to a suitable candidate by an ordained

Minister over a font in a valid church service. Like many other formulae, it may instead feature in what Austin dubs '*parasitic*' usage (1962: 22) - in the 'fictional' discourses of novels and poems, in reported or 'cited' speech, in 'rehearsal' situations and in general speculative or theoretical language about speech events such as we have been using here (cf. Searle 1979: 58-75). What is more, these 'special cases' raise vital questions about the relative status of liturgical performatives in written or 'prayer book' texts as contrasted with spoken or 'performed' sacral discourse - questions which as we have already seen, bear particularly on English Reformed worship. It is clear that although there may be an overt co-identity between locution, illocution and illocutionary force in many 'standard' institutional speech acts, 'parasitic uses' like those just noted show that wider felicity conditions must still be taken into account. Indeed, specifically within *Christian* discourse, it would be simplistic to suppose that any formulaic locutions could be treated *causatively* like 'magic spells' - ie. as always possessing the same, inherent illocutionary force regardless of the context in which they are uttered. No doubt, anthropological linguists like Malinowski (1935) and Tambiah (1968) have shown this to be a prevalent paradigm of sacred speech in various exotic religions and cultures, but as Thiselton confirms (1974), the 'operational force' of Judaeo-Christian sacred language rests more characteristically on 'procedures and presuppositions in a *context of promise* related to the *covenantal* God', and on 'institutional features' in covenant community's 'life' which extra-

linguistically 'set the stage' for effective speech acts (1974; 1992: 293). As a key illustration of this phenomenon, Thiselton observes:

...when Isaac cannot revoke Jacob's blessing [Gen 27], this is not necessarily because his words are believed to be like a grenade whose explosion can only be awaited, but because, in Austin's terms, to give the same blessing to Esau would be like saying 'I do' to a second bride, or like saying 'I appoint you' when someone has already been appointed. A *convention* for withdrawing the performative utterance did not exist; hence the original performative remains effectively in force. (1974: 294).

For similar reasons, Jeffner (1972: 101-4) is sceptical about regarding eucharistic performatives as 'power prescriptions', while post Vatican II, Martinich is clear that 'treating the sacraments as speech acts gives some content to the denial that [they] involve magic'. Martinich goes on:

It is quite clear that the sacraments are not magic if they operate like promising, inaugurating and non-sacramental marrying; that is, if they are speech acts. Just as a person actually becomes president by uttering the oath of office, a person really becomes a priest by the sacramental words of ordination. The change from 'layman' to 'official' occurs without tricks, mirrors or occult powers. It is the *conventions* of the society using the language that make it so. (1975a: 297, my emphasis).

For Calvin, a similar 'anti-occultism' is apparent both in his own doxology, and in his swingeing polemic against Medieval Roman Catholic doctrine. Fundamentally, Calvin follows Augustine in his conviction that 'words' should never be confused with the 'power' of liturgy. Words for Calvin are 'nothing but signs', and in this sense resemble the elements of bread and wine. Moreover, while signs may ultimately change, 'faith' remains immutable ([1559] 1960: IV.14.15;

IV.14.26). Indeed, signs without faith are 'empty' because it is only *through* faith that they become 'operative' in worship. On this point, at least, Calvin is very close to Ladrière (1973: 61-2, 1.407ff.). Faith in turn is a gift of God mediated by the Holy Spirit, so any idea that mere signs - whether verbal or material - could intrinsically convey the 'real presence' of Christ is anathema (Calvin [1559] 1960: IV.14.14). This is one of the central pillars of Calvin's attack on the Mass, which he argues had perpetuated just such an 'ontological' and 'causative' view of liturgical language and symbol, and which had thus led 'men's pitiable minds' to 'repose in the appearance of a physical thing rather than in God Himself' (IV.14.14).

Although Calvin's 'epistemology' of sacral discourse is worked out with specific regard to the sacrament of holy communion, its applicability to other parts of liturgy is readily inferred from his conviction that the word 'sacrament' has a 'wider sense' beyond its specific relation to eucharist and baptism. This sense is the sense in which it 'embraces generally all those signs which God has ever enjoined upon men to render them more certain and confident of the truth of his promises' (IV.14.18). Since language is itself 'nothing but signs', it is clear from Calvin that as and when it mediates, and is received as conveying, the unchanging 'Word of God', so then *and only then* can the language of worship more generally be said to possess a 'sacramental' illocutionary force (IV.14.6, cf. Vincent 1979: 153).

Now one of the major reasons why a causative 'word-magic' hypothesis might prove tempting with regard to religious language in general and liturgical language in particular stems from the fact that these varieties appear to exhibit a high

proportion of model *explicit* performatives, excessive attention to which might well obscure the true 'illocutionary logic' of worship. We shall need now to devote special attention to this problem.

#### 5.4.2 The problem of 'explicit performatives' in liturgy

We have seen how Austin arrived at a rejection of fixed grammatical criteria for performatives. Nevertheless, as Leech (1983: 175-9) observes, it is clear that in spite of this he remained wedded to the notion of certain, mostly first person indicative active, verb forms as paradigmatic manifestations or 'icons' of the performative character of speech in general (Austin 1962: 67-8; 160-1).

At one point, Austin puts forward what Recanati (1987: 44-63) has since termed a 'Paratactic Hypothesis' in relation to such 'explicit performative verbs' (1962: 67ff). This is to say, he casts them as devices which variously 'make plain' (70) or 'make clearer' (73) the 'force of the utterance or... how it is to be taken' (73). So, for example, 'I shall be there' *may* function pragmatically as a promise in its own right, but prefixing it with 'I promise that' underlines and confirms its operation as such (69). In our own corpus, when the Minister at Wheatley says, 'strengthen and enlighten us, we beseech you O God' (AS 6.565), or when the Minister at Weoley Castle prays 'Lord for the things we take for granted,... we say thank you' (AS 7.578-80), the 'we beseech' and 'we say' have a similar function.

Significantly, Austin insists that the explicit performative in such cases is more than purely 'descriptive', discourse deictic (70), or as Lyons (1977: 782) would later put it, 'token reflexive'. This is to say, it is not *merely* a 'report' of action taking place elsewhere in the sentence, in the so-called 'pure' or 'primary' performative<sup>5</sup>. This is due to the fact that while subject to 'abuse' or 'misfire' in the way we have already discussed, such explicit performatives cannot be 'true' or 'false' in a strict, propositional sense. To say them is still, in itself, to perform an action - even though this action may be carried out insincerely or illegally, and thus 'unhappily' (86). This would also apply to explicit performative statements like 'I confess that I have sinned' and 'I declare that they are husband and wife'. Even so, severe problems remain in this line of analysis - problems which Austin himself came to recognise and which Warnock (1973), Searle (1979a: 1-29) and Recanati (1987: 44ff) have since exposed further.

First, despite Austin's formal separation of 'pure' and 'explicit' performatives, it is plain that the same single verb-form may realise both at once. For instance, a statement like 'I salute you' characteristically effects an action while simultaneously signalling the force of that action. Likewise, Bach & Harnish (1979: 117-9) pinpoint a cardinal instance of this phenomenon in the policeman's "'You're under arrest'", which 'informs' the arrestee of what is happening even while helping to *make* it happen. Comparable examples from URC worship would be as follows:

---

5. Austin in fact develops an intriguing thesis in regard to the pure/explicit distinction (pp.71-3, 83) when he suggests that the former will tend to predate the latter in a society's linguistic evolution.

- (32) MINISTER: I *call upon you* to pray for [Lucy],  
and *care* for her  
  
(AS 9.181-2, my emphasis)
- (33) MINISTER: God,  
coming to be with us in Jesus,  
*we greet* your coming with joy  
  
(AS 2.289-91, my emphasis)
- (34) MINISTER: So Lord we *give you praise and glory* on this day  
  
(AS 4.56, my emphasis)

Second, and more complexly, Austin admits that even while they are not simply 'descriptive', the descriptive element of explicit performatives is often such as to make for an *ambiguity* which is then hard to disentangle. Hence 'I approve' may have 'the performative force of giving approval or it may have a descriptive meaning: 'I favour this" - or, presumably, both (1962: 78). Likewise, liturgical staples like 'we praise' or 'we glorify' could be seen as simultaneously describing extant affective activity or as *themselves instantiating* such activity. Further still, distinguishing these functions is again made more difficult by a need to make value judgments about the inner motivations, intentions and feelings of the speakers - eg. whether in saying 'God, we greet you' they are actually welcoming Him afresh or merely 'bidding Him welcome' in order to fulfil a ritualistic obligation (AS 2.282; cf. Austin 1962: 78-9)

At one level, these complexities are no more than might be expected given the aforementioned recognition - implicit in Austin and explicit in Searle - that many speech acts contain both a 'stating' *and* a 'doing' element. Austin's difficulty is that



he can find no *fixed* or *objective* criterion by which these elements may be distinguished, one from the other. As he says himself, 'it is often not easy to be sure that, even when it is apparently in explicit form, an utterance is performative or that it is not'(1962: 91). Neither is it only 'extrinsic' or 'material' performatives which sow such confusion: Austin also cites the liturgically relevant 'I know that' and 'I believe that' as more mentalistically 'complicated' examples of verbs which may be read both 'descriptively' and 'performatively'. The question of whether 'thinking' and 'believing' can constitute 'doing' is, indeed, a vexed one, and goes to the very heart of traditional philosophical distinctions between cognition and action or 'thought' and 'expression'. What is more, it is a question which becomes especially pertinent in the liturgical context. How, for example, are we to interpret the following utterances from a 'performative' point of view?:

- (35) MINISTER: We remember Christ's death  
(AS 2.439 - Extemporary Eucharistic Thanksgiving)
- (36) MINISTER: We realise our unworthiness to approach you O God  
(AS 2.501 - Extemporary Prayer of Access)
- (37) MINISTER: And Father we think  
of the Eastern Bloc and Romania,  
(AS 4.636-7 - Extemporary Intercession)
- (38) MINISTER: Father we acknowledge that,  
everything we have received,  
you have given us.  
(AS 5.229-31 - Extemporary prayer to dedicate offering)

In each case here, it transpires that the mental 'reference' of the locution is incidental when compared to the pragmatic force of the illocution. In their respective contexts, all four prayers (35) - (38) serve not only to denote existing 'states of mind'; nor do they themselves simply 'bring about' the 'remembrance', 'realisation', 'thought' and 'acknowledgement' they describe. Rather, they must be seen to carry an additional illocutionary load of *instruction* to the congregation as to what it should pray *next*. The first person plural pronouns are in this sense deceptive: no doubt, the Minister is praying *along with* the people, but he is also 'going ahead' of them and prompting them from 'in front'.

Now Austin himself did at least begin to acknowledge such complications. Towards the end of *How to Do Things with Words* he becomes much clearer that locutionary 'phemes' cannot *themselves* be performative, and that they can only become so when ascribed a certain illocutionary 'force' - a force which is in its turn determined by context and usage. As his eventual title suggests, *it is people who 'do things with words'* rather than (as in the 'magic spell' scenario) words which do things to people (1962: 60). Granted, our own data has confirmed that on specific occasions, particular verbs, or other grammatical elements, may be uttered in such a way as to make the illocutionary force of a speech act 'explicit' and may even, when thus articulated, form an integral part of the speech act itself; finally, however, they cannot *themselves* be classed as 'illocutionary'. Instead, as Searle (1969: 62) puts it, they will typically function as *Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices* (IFID's), manifesting not some parallel 'pure' performative, but rather

confirming the full situated act which is performed *in* the contextualised utterance of the sentence to which they belong (cf. Levinson 1983: 238). What is particularly significant about this approach for our purposes is that it allows for the placement of explicit performative verbs within a much broader domain of phenomena which might clarify the purport of an illocutionary act: in this sense indeed, they belong in the same class as pragmatically-determinating linguistic variables like 'word-order, stress, intonation...punctuation and mood' (Searle 1969: 30). Perhaps more significantly still, though, they could justifiably be related to *paralinguistic* and *extralinguistic* IFID's like gestures and sacramental symbols (cf. Leech & Thomas 1990: 176).

On our Advent Sunday tapes, there are numerous instances of explicit performatives functioning as IFID's in the way just outlined. At the Offertory for example, we see physical acts of 'giving money' integrated with utterances like the following:

- (39) MINISTER:      Father [...]  
                              we bring these gifts,  
                              particularly for the work of your kingdom  
                              (AS 5.243-5)
- (40) MINISTER:      Lord (...)  
                              we return  
                              these tokens of our love and commitment  
                              (AS 8.333-6)
- (41)                      Loving God,  
                              we give you back these tokens of our love for you  
                              (AS 9.278-9)

If such speech acts have a broadly 'sacramental' quality in their strong fusion of verbal and non-verbal signs, an even more canonical sacramentalism is evident in these eucharistic co-incidences of 'word' and 'deed':

(42) MINISTER: [While breaking the communion loaf]

We break this bread  
to share in the body of Christ

(AS 8.425-6)

(43) MINISTER: So we take this bread  
and we take this wine  
and we set it aside for that special purpose which God  
has given it  
to us for.

(AS 4.722-6)

Once again, the explicit performatives used in such sequences are more than just 'commentaries' on the 'actions' of offertory, fraction and consecration; on the contrary, in fact, they form an essential *part* of these actions. It is not as if the non-verbal gestures of 'bringing money' and 'reserving' or 'breaking' bread could alone mediate the illocutionary force of 'offertory', 'fraction' and 'consecration'. Neither, as we have seen, is anything significant 'done' by the words themselves. Rather, language and gesture *together* 'indicate' or 'make explicit' an illocutionary force which derives neither from each in isolation, nor even from both in combination. Calvin was clear that the general quality of 'sacramentality' was dependent on a merging of verbal and non-verbal semiosis ([1559] 1960: IV.14.15; 18), but even this merger is seen as necessary rather than sufficient because *'the sacrament is one*

*thing, the power of the sacrament another'* (TV.14.15, my emphasis). Indeed, the 'power' - or in our terms, the 'illocutionary force' - of the sacrament derived not from performing the right 'ceremony', important though this ceremony was; instead, it derived from the performance of the ceremony *in a specific context* - namely the corporate worship of gathered believers in church. To this day, Reformed denominations discourage sacramental enactment outside the setting of congregational praise: Calvin was particularly scathing about 'private Masses' on the grounds that they imputed 'power' to ritual itself, rather than to the Word of God and to personal and ecclesial 'faith' as it is manifested in the church service as a whole. Likewise, not only baptism, but other more broadly sacramental acts like candle-lighting and absolution tend to be confined to formal public services, and are certainly not endorsed as 'official' acts of personal devotion in the same way as in the Roman or Eastern Orthodox traditions (von Allmen 1965: 61-2). Hence while Ladrière insists that 'sacramental performativity' acquires its proper force only 'in the context of the prayer of the Canon' (1973: 61, 1.382-3), Reformed doxology would insist even more specifically that it is within the whole 'context of situation' of public church worship that liturgical expressions most fully attain to the status of liturgical 'illocutionary acts'. This compares favourably with Austin's conclusion that 'what we have to study is *not* the sentence [or, we might add, grammatical categories like explicit performative verbs] but the issuing of an utterance in a speech situation' (1962: 139).

If all this seems to augur well for a 'pragmatic explication of Reformed

worship, Austin himself stops frustratingly short of developing his argument more thoroughly to suit such an explication. Hence, even in his final Lecture, he still deduces a classification of illocutionary *forces* according to lexicographical criteria - to no less, in fact, than a 'dictionary survey' of so-called 'explicit performative' verbs! (1962: 150). Leech rightly criticizes this methodology as 'fallacious', and notices a similar internal contradiction even within the work of Searle:

The *ILLOCUTIONARY-VERB FALLACY* is the view that the analysis of illocutionary force can be suitably approached through the analysis of the meaning of illocutionary verbs such as *advise*, *command* and *promise*. On the face of it, this appears to be a reasonable approach. But it leads to the error of 'grammaticizing' pragmatic force. Whereas the sense of illocutionary verbs is part of grammar, to be analysed in categorical terms, illocutionary force is to be analysed in rhetorical and noncategorical terms. When we are analysing illocutionary verbs, we are dealing with grammar, whereas when we are analysing the illocutionary force of utterances, we are dealing with pragmatics. It is easy to confuse the two things, because one is part of the metalanguage of the other...But it is to commit a fundamental and obvious error to assume that the distinctions made by our vocabulary necessarily exist in reality. Language provides us with verbs like *order*, *request*, *beg*, *plead*, just as it provides us with nouns like *puddle*, *pond*, *lake*, *sea*, *ocean*. But we should no more assume that there are in pragmatic reality distinct categories such as orders and requests than that there are in geographical reality distinct categories such as puddles, ponds and lakes. Somehow, this assumption slips unnoticed into Searle's introduction to his taxonomy [of illocutionary acts 1979a:2]...But ...a) one has no right to assume in advance that such categories exist in reality (although one might discover them by observation) and b)...in actuality, when one *does* observe them, illocutions are...like puddles and ponds, distinguished by continuous rather than by discrete characteristics. (1983: 177-8)

Leech's argument here amplifies precisely what we said in the previous section about illocutionary force operating along a *cline* of generality and specificity according to contextual or 'pragmatic' definition. Thus, while 'I baptize' may be an explicit performative, the degree of illocutionary force it indicates, far from being 'innate' or 'stable', will vary in direct proportion to its 'situatedness' and

'appropriacy' - as well as to the related presence of other IFID's such as the non-verbal ritual of sprinkling from, or immersion in, a specified font or baptistry. In the face of such scalar variability and context-dependence, it would indeed be hard to maintain a purely causal, 'word-spell' perspective for even overtly sacramental language: not only 'I baptize' but also 'I anoint', 'I ordain', 'I induct', 'I consecrate' and 'I pronounce them husband and wife' may all appear to carry 'intrinsic' illocutionary force and so to be 'self-actualizing', but in fact this force will be determined by their conjunction or otherwise, with appropriate extralinguistic ceremonies undertaken in appropriate circumstances. As we have shown, Austin did finally propose that in reality, illocutionary acts *in toto* are tied to 'conventions' (115; 121-2). Indeed, we have also confirmed that he came to see this as their defining characteristic. What is less clear, having been questioned by commentators from Warnock (1973) to Recanati (1987: 44ff.), is what Austin actually *meant* by 'conventions' - and in particular, whether he had in mind strongly *institutional* activities like those just described, or whether he intended the term to extend much wider, to include general human attitudes and/or 'idiomatic' strategies within language itself. After all, even in church worship, it is possible to imagine illocutionary acts which might be 'brought about' more simply (though not exclusively) by the process of speaking than by some requisite parallel action: promising/vowing, confessing, absolving, prophesying and blessing are, for instance, largely gesture-free in non-Conformist liturgies, being accomplished with utterances rendered felicitous more by the overall context of 'corporate worship'

than by any attendant kinesic ceremony.

These distinctions in turn raise the question of whether liturgical illocutions can in any way be divided according to whether their conventional dynamic is such that they alter states of affairs more 'by themselves', or whether certain states of affairs are *already* either in existence or taking shape, to which they are then either matched or 'added'.

In order to address these key issues of convention and 'direction' in liturgical speech activity, it is necessary to examine Austin's crucial distinction between illocutionary acts as acts achieved *in* saying and perlocutionary effects as effects achieved *by* saying.

#### 5.4.3 Illocutions and perlocutions in worship

If, as we suggested above, the formulaic utterances of religion often reveal an overlap between locutionary and illocutionary action, even further complications arise from Austin's attempt to distinguish between illocutions and perlocutions. This distinction is crucial because it goes to the heart of the relationship between language-use and 'the world', and specifically the way each relies on, affects and 'shapes' the other (Wunderlich 1979: 269). Austin devotes both Lectures IX and X to this matter, but as we have already mentioned, his guiding principle throughout is that illocutions may be differentiated according to



the criterion of *conventionality*. In practice, this means that whereas perlocutions comprise a whole range of social, psychological and physical *effects* - effects which might just as well be achieved by a variety of means beyond language itself - illocutions are inextricably bound up with the established *linguistic* usages through which these effects are brought about (1962: 119).

According to Austin, a major test of conventionality, and so of illocutions as opposed to perlocutions, is that the former 'could be made explicit by the performative formula' (1962: 103). Thus, whereas illocutionary acts might be realised in the utterance of types like 'I argue that' or 'I warn you that', we cannot manifest their perlocutionary effects in the same way by saying 'I convince you that' or 'I alarm you that' (103-4). Austin's examples here seem persuasive, but they are decidedly partial. Remembering Leech's critique of the 'performative verb fallacy', we might well wonder whether correspondence between the grammar and semantics of verbs and the dynamics of actions in the world are always quite this neat. As Ravenhill hints (1976: 35) and Tilley (1991: 20ff.) confirms, in liturgical situations the lines between illocutionary acts and perlocutionary outcomes are often especially hard to discern. Even confining ourselves to first person forms, we might very well wonder how 'illocution' and 'perlocution' are to be distinguished in cases like 'I absolve you', 'I induct you' or 'We bless you', where if the speech act is sacrally instantiated, it would seem simultaneously to encode intention *and* effect, speaker-initiation *and* hearer-impact. Indeed, Austin's assumed model of an addressor (A) uttering an illocution which has perlocutionary effect on a discrete,

comprehending addressee (*B*) quite overlooks the fact that many illocutionary acts are *reflexive*, such that the 'illocutor' is simultaneously the object of the perlocution, so making distinctions that much harder and thus incidentally undermining any strict delineation of 'illocutionary verbs'<sup>6</sup>. In church worship alone, we could cite here the formulae 'I repent', 'I confess' and 'we rejoice', all of which may be uttered in such a way as to produce 'certain consequential effects' upon the 'feelings, thoughts or actions' of the *speaker(s)* (cf. Austin 1962: 101), and which may thus bear at one and the same time an illocutionary act and an 'introspective' perlocutionary effect.

Admittedly, liturgical discourse might always be assigned a transcendent *divine* hearer, God, but the fact that these locutions can function similarly when used outside the immediate church context reinforces their potential for illocutionary/perlocutionary ambiguity. Doubtless, Austin accepted that 'the same word may genuinely be used in both illocutionary and perlocutionary ways' (1962: 125), but he seems not to have envisaged what we have observed - namely that this might occur *simultaneously within the same single utterance*.

The confusion of what Austin calls 'means' and 'ends' in speech acts (130) is evident even in those instances where conventionality is manifested apart from language itself. To illustrate this, let us return to a familiar example. It is clear that even in a proper church with appropriate personnel, the illocutionary act realised in saying 'I baptize *x* in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit' will not

---

5. There is a hint by Austin (1962: 101) that perlocutionary effects may be wrought on 'the speaker', but this is not borne out in his subsequent analysis, which is entirely based on a speaker-hearer paradigm.

*eo ipse* have the perlocutionary effect of 'baptizing *x*'. This will only be attained with attendant sprinkling or immersion of *x* by a proper person in the approved way. But it would be wrong to infer from this that the verbal formula is 'illocutionary' and the non-verbal ritual 'perlocutionary'. Far from it: *both* combine means-end qualities while *themselves* interacting in a complex fashion. Simply saying 'I baptize etc.' is not to *effect* baptism, but neither is simply sprinkling or immersing *x* in the approved manner. Both the verbal ritual and the non-verbal ritual are here simultaneously *means to* action and *action itself*: baptism is not something which exists *apart from* 'word' and water, as if they were merely the instruments used to achieve it; rather, its substance precisely consists of the word and water as they are conjoined with the requisite sacral context of a faithful gathered church grounded in the Word of God. It is for these reasons that Blakemore (1992: 92) is so badly mistaken when judging that, like naming ships and consecrating buildings, baptism only 'happens to involve language' and that since it could be performed 'without an audience', cannot 'have anything to do with communication, and hence pragmatics, at all'.

To be fair, Austin's original distinction between illocutions as acts done *in* saying and perlocutions as acts done *by* saying begins to break down towards the end of *How to Do Things with Words* (1962: 132-3), and he admits that other tests such as the explicit performative check for illocutions are 'at best very slippery' (131). For all these qualifications, however, Austin's division between illocutions and perlocutions does at least have the virtue of defining a distinct *emphasis* and

*focus* for speech act theory in particular and pragmatics in general. By making it clear that his main concern is with analysis of the *illocutionary* act (103), Austin strikes that keynote of language-specificity which we ourselves are pursuing. As Leech & Thomas confirm,

The locution belongs to the traditional territory of truth-based semantics. The perlocution belongs strictly beyond the investigation of language and meaning, since it deals with the effect, or result, of an utterance: whether my words *persuade* someone to lend me £10 depends on factors (psychological, social or physical factors) beyond my control, and is only partly a matter of what I said. The illocution occupies the middle ground between them: the ground now considered the territory of pragmatics, of meaning in context. (1990: 176, cf. Searle & Vanderveken 1985: 11-12).

From what we have seen, the intertwining of illocutions and perlocutions in worship is obviously not to be underestimated. All the same, there can be little doubt that a dedicated study of perlocutionary effects in liturgy would be only *incidentally* linguistic, rather than concentratedly linguistic-pragmatic. This is underlined by Martinich (1975b: 416), who, in seeking to discern liturgical perlocutions, pinpoints 'grace' on the grounds that it is available beyond the church and is thus not bound by 'convention'. Along the same lines, Mananzan (1974: 75) offers 'communality' as a core perlocution of credal illocutionary acts. Of course, Reformed doctrine would support these two suggestions: after all, one of its key foundations is *sola gratia* and one of its governing teleologies concerns the church's call to be a 'federal' or 'covenant' community of the faithful (Stroup 1992; Wallace 1992). Of course, too, Tilley is right when he argues that attending to

perlocutionary 'ends' as well as to illocutionary 'means' will reveal that '*results* can change the meaning of the act performed, as the difference between "assault and battery" and "manslaughter" shows' (1991: 21). Likewise, it should be clear by now that we would sympathise with Tilley's further conviction that 'to avoid the Scylla of pure intentionalism and the Charybdis of unlimited consequentialism, we need to focus on how *context* provides the connection between the intention to perform an act and the results of performing that act' (1991: 22).

Despite all these qualifications, there is still a sense in which assessing the perlocutionary outcomes of worship is a task which must remain substantially beyond the scope of the liturgical pragmatician. Analysing liturgical discourse cannot, typically, reveal whether the prayers spoken in worship are actually answered; it is unlikely to determine whether a worshipper has actually understood the Scripture readings; neither will it establish whether individual communicants have in fact received the bread and wine as Christ's 'body and blood'. As Calvin stresses time and again, these matters are decided by the presence or otherwise of the Holy Spirit and faith, and even a thoroughly contextual analysis of sacral language is unlikely to resolve such things. No doubt, liturgical theology can indicate what Christian worship *should* achieve, but as we have already stressed from Empereur (1987: 8), the theory and practice of worship will not necessarily coincide. What is more, with specific reference to the Reformed service, Wolterstorff (1992: 297-9) has pointed unconsciously but suggestively to a root assumption that its perlocutions will come about mainly *after* worship has taken

place - through its participants' quotidian 'work in the world'. As we shall see in Chapter 7, this perceived liturgical 'purpose' can be seen to have had a reciprocal effect on the actual *composition* of Reformed services as monological, explicative and 'didactic' rather than as dialogical and responsive and 'doxological'. Of more immediate pertinence to our current exposition however, is Ladrière's gravid proposal that even if not realised, the perlocutions of worship are still often discernibly 'hoped for' and 'looked forward to' in its illocutionary construction - that they are thus somehow 'registered in an eschatological perspective' and that 'performativity' is thus both 'now' and 'not yet'. We shall attempt to bear out this intuition, but in order to do so, we need first to take a closer look at the nature of sacral illocutions themselves.

### 5.5 Illocutionary acts, illocutionary forces and 'directions of fit' in liturgy

In seeking to *classify* the illocutionary elements of speech-action, Austin reiterates that attention should be directed beyond purely syntactic or semantic criteria: 'We said long ago that we needed a list of 'explicit performative verbs'; but...we now see that what we need is a list of *illocutionary forces*...' (1962: 149-50).

At first sight, this shift might appear to push us back towards a 'perlocutionary'

assessment of 'action' along psychological, psychophysical, sociological or purely doxological lines, rather than towards a firmly language-centred analysis. Austin is clear, however, that because the 'forces' in question are illocutionary, they must of necessity arise from the issuing of *utterances* (1962: 150). Now as we have seen, Austin in fact remains too *exclusively* attached to one linguistic conduit of illocutionary force - the 'explicit performative verb'. What is more, this narrow focus has meant that those who have applied Austin's framework to liturgy have concentrated unduly on explicit sacral speech acts like 'I baptise you', 'I declare you to be husband and wife' etc. at the expense of other significant pragmatic aspects of church service discourse. One consequence of Austin's 'performative verb fallacy' is that his illocutionary taxonomy classifies only those forces which might be imagined as deriving from, or being mediated by, the use of items belonging to this limited grammatical set. Having said all this, Austin's 'rough' and 'general' schema (151) provides an important starting-point - not least for the comparison and contrast of various liturgical speech acts. He suggests five main classes for illocutions, and it will be helpful to summarise his explanation of them as a whole before inferring any application to worship discourse.

Austin identifies a first group of illocutionary forces under the general heading *Verdictives*. Verdictives comprise acts of *judging* and *assessing* - that is, of 'giving a finding as to something' (151). In Austin's exegesis, they might be realised by verbs such as 'I acquit', 'I reckon', 'I estimate' and 'I calculate', although the fact that his classification is according to force rather than verb form is here upheld by his

citing a cricket umpire's moodless 'no ball' as similarly verdictive (153). Often, in order to be effective in a particular context, these must be issued by some officially-designated person (eg. a judge or referee).

Secondly, *Exercitives* are specified as differing from Verdictives inasmuch as they constitute 'a decision that something *is* to be so, as distinct from a judgement that it is so'. An Exercitive is thus 'an award as opposed to an assessment; it is a sentence as opposed to a verdict' (155). Austin offers as examples 'appoint', 'dismiss', 'degrade', 'resign', 'repeal' etc. Even more than with Verdictives, there is usually some link with 'vested authority'.

Thirdly, *Commissives* commit the speaker to a certain course of action: 'vow', 'adopt', 'oppose', 'swear', 'bet', 'guarantee' and 'consent' belong in this category, which is clearly more affective and reflexive than the preceding two.

The fourth class of illocutions identified by Austin are *Behabitives* - 'a very miscellaneous group', having to do with 'attitudes and social behaviour' (152). Examples given are 'thank', 'deplore', 'condole', 'resent' and 'blame'. They are in fact difficult to distinguish from Commissives; indeed, Austin's suggestion that they might be defined as entailing 'reaction' to some external stimulus or phenomenon (151) is belied by the fact that this criterion applies equally to 'consent', 'side with' and 'embrace' - all of which he classes as Commissive. What is more, 'apologise', 'welcome', 'bless' and 'arise', which Austin cites as Behabitives, undoubtedly involve a considerable degree of self-commitment or 'commissive force'.

Finally, *Expositives* relate to 'the expounding of views, the conducting of



arguments and the clarifying of usages and references'. In this sense, they are most obviously generated in the sort of 'token-reflexive' utterance of explicit performatives which we alluded to earlier: 'I quote', 'I recapitulate', 'I cite' are all obvious Expositives. Then again, Austin accepts that Expositives might simultaneously indicate the force of a Verdictive (as in 'concede', 'insist' and 'argue'), a Commissive ('accept', 'support', 'testify', 'maintain') and a Behabitive ('demur', 'boggle at').

As these explanations confirm, Austin's five categories interact with one another to a marked degree. Moreover, this becomes especially apparent as one attempts an analysis of *liturgical* speech acts according to his taxonomy. The distinction between Verdictives and Exercitives, for instance, is far from straightforward in worship. Ostensibly, the more or less spontaneous 'judgements' and 'opinions' required for Verdictives are all but absent from church services. Preachers may be permitted to 'give their assessment' of certain matters, and prophets may offer 'reckonings' of political or spiritual situations, but in each case intentionalities are likely to be predetermined rather than purely synchronic or personal - that is, constrained by the prior estimations of scriptural, doctrinal and ecclesiastical discourse. Furthermore, insofar as 'judgement' is pronounced 'feliculously' in such cases, it will be assumed to have originated with God, rather than with the preacher or prophet - a massive complication which confirms that liturgical pragmatics cannot do for long without liturgical theology - particularly as it relates to the doctrine of the Word of God. Admittedly, in secular contexts,

judges and arbiters may be constrained by extant 'rules', 'statutes' and 'precedents', but it is still assumed by Austin that their Verdictives will have about them an element of personal, cognitive 'discretion'. This is much harder to detect in liturgical illocutions, which tend to be more obviously Exercitive - even when possessing the sort of locutionary form more normally associated with assessing, reckoning, calculating etc.. It is precisely because of this norm that the following remark from the Minister of Weoley Castle seems so startling. A member of the congregation has just read the set lection Matthew 25: 31-46, which ends with Jesus affirming the prospect of 'eternal punishment' for the unrighteous. The Minister then comments:

(44)                    I still don't...like it  
                               (AS 7.332)

Perhaps it might be argued that this utterance is more Behabitive than Verdictive, given that it clearly expresses a viewpoint derived from personal opinion rather than one commensurate with the speaker's status as a 'Minister of the Word'. Even so, 'personal opinion' is hardly a prerogative of Reformed worship, and it is particularly striking to see it articulated at this point in the service. Less egregious but still somewhat incongruously partial are the kind of Verdictive evaluations offered by the Ministers at Bulwell and Heme Hill:

(45) CONG.: Amen.

...(8.0)...

MINISTER: Thank- that's a lovely amen!

(AS 7.78-9)

(46) MINISTER: And our hymn,  
is a good..Advent hymn,  
and perhaps we'll sing it with the gusto that I think it deserves.

(AS 1. 198-200)

These, however, are exceptional in our field corpus, and find no corollary in 'service book' rites. Rather, they appear as parenthetical comments on the main substance of liturgical discourse, and would certainly make no claim to mediate 'the Word of God'. As we have said, it is more likely that the 'personal assessment' of sacral Verdictives will seek or imply some official sanction as a 'word from the Lord'. Certainly, they appear more significant and central to the purpose of worship when thus presented. The Warsash transcript bears this out clearly:

(47) MINISTER: [From microphone]

Before I..say what..I believe God has laid on my heart,  
er I want to invite ..Pete to share the scripture which er..has  
been given to him this morning  
because it seems to me to be a very good..foundation on- upon which to  
base erm,  
or with which to follow as it were what I have to say.

(AS 5.307-10)

If the above remains hedged by admissions that the Verdictive force might just be personally rather than divinely motivated ('it seems to me'), the same cannot be

said of the next two examples, both of which follow prayers of confession. Though ostensibly analogous to Austin's Verdictive 'I acquit', they are in fact more thoroughly predetermined in their respective contexts: the Minister cannot equally say to the congregation 'Your sins are *not* forgiven' or 'You are *not* free', and so the *optional* component of the Verdictive is missing:

- (48) MINISTER:        Here are words that you may trust,  
                              words that merit full acceptance:  
                              'Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners'.  
                              Your sins are forgiven for his sake.

(URC 1989: 20)

- (49) MINISTER:        Scripture says Christ is the one through whom we have forgiveness,  
                              accept it,  
                              believe it,  
                              we are free.

(AS 9. 43-6)

As Austin himself admits, 'Exercitive' may describe 'absolving' illocutions like these better than 'Verdictive', since they are certainly akin more to 'awards' than 'assessments' (1962: 155). Likewise, in this sense it is no surprise that Austin classes 'pardon' as an Exercitive rather than a Verdictive. Having said this, Exercitives are still presented by him as active *decisions* - albeit that something 'is to be so, as distinct from a judgement that it is so'. There is, therefore, still an element of 'ostensive wilfulness' even in Austin's Exercitive - something which, as we have seen, may be unnecessary for the effective operation of liturgical acts. Perhaps, indeed, the 'absolutions' in question are better labelled 'Expositive' - signalling the performance of an act which is taking place *in any case*, or, as

Thiselton (1992: 301) intimates, even expounding an act which has *already occurred* but which needs somehow to be 'appropriated' in the here and now: namely, the atoning death of Christ. This analysis would certainly account for the Scripture quotations which precede, authorise and so contextualize the pronouncements which ensue. In Reformed soteriology, the sacrifice of Christ on the cross is characteristically viewed as a once-for-all offering for the sins of the world, and 'absolution' is more decisively mediated as a 'declaration' of the forgiveness *already* wrought by God, than by a reprieve conferred upon individuals at the discretion of a Priest or Minister (Calvin [1559] 1960: III.4.18-19; Nichols 1968: 42-3). Thus while Calvin did retain 'private confession', he denied its previous status as a 'sacrament' and cast it more as a 'preparation' for corporate confession than as an end in itself. In the URC Service Books of 1980 and 1989, these emphases are reflected in the description of absolution as an 'Assurance of Pardon', even though there is no doubt that what has been assured 'objectively' by God must still be 'received' in 'repentance' and 'faith' if it is to be fully effective in human lives.

Now Ladrière in large measure endorses this concept of 'decisive' past acts of God being 'reappropriated' and 'reapplied' in present liturgical celebration. Hence supremely at the eucharist, he contends that 'in repeating the words of the Last Supper the celebrant does more than commemorate it. He repeats once again that which Christ did, in giving again to the words which Christ used that efficacy which Christ gave them, in conferring on them the power to do what they mean'

(1973: 61, 1.373-8). Although Reformed doctrine would robustly question the causal powers of 're-effectuation' assigned to the Priest here, there is no question that the linking of present Verdictives like 'This is the body of Christ' or present Exercitives like '[This bread] will become for us the body of Christ' rely for their 'performativity' on a previous 'decision' that they should be so - a decision pronounced by Jesus in the Upper Room.

More prosaically, the same past-present decisiveness can be seen to apply to those liturgical Verdictives and Exercitives validated by some prior endorsement of the 'institution' or 'tradition' of the *church*. Thus, illocutionary acts performed by appointed officials when, say, ordaining, inducting or receiving someone into membership can be seen as linguistic manifestations of decisions taken *in advance* - by church meetings, councils, committees and so on. Indeed, just such a process is made transparent in the following instances:

(50) MINISTER: In accordance with the decision of this church, I declare that you are inducted to the office of elder in this church.

(URC 1989: 99)

(51) MODERATOR: In accordance with the decision of the District Council, I declare you to be commissioned to the office of lay preacher in the United Reformed Church.

(URC 1989: 103)

Though clearly significant, the observations just made should not be taken as a blanket denial of 'spontaneous' and 'personally chosen' Exercitives. As hinted at by

Austin himself (1962: 156), worshippers in free prayer may use 'I pray' in just this fashion, while an unplanned exorcism at a Pentecostal service may be marked by the exorcist's uttering 'I rebuke you' to a perceived demon, even while at the same time claiming ecclesial authority 'in the name of Christ' (Martin 1984: 65-6). Indeed, the less formulaic the discourse in a church service, the more likely it is that such apparently unpremeditated (and thus 'classical') Exercitives' will arise. Certainly, those frequent ascriptions of 'praise', 'blessing' and 'glory' to God interjected by Charismatic worshippers at various points in the service at Warsash could be read as fully-intentionalised 'awards' in accordance with Austin's own criterion for Exercitives (AS 5. 194-201; 269ff.; 288ff.).

Now insofar as it archetypally contains acts of 'promising', 'covenanting' and 'pledging' (cf. Austin 1962: 157), there can be little doubt that Austin's third class of *Commissives* is well represented in liturgy. Participants are called to 'commit' themselves explicitly in a variety of special ceremonies and services. Personal vows expressed with the formulae 'I do' and 'I will' appear commissively several times in rites for baptism, dedication, marriage, ordination and induction, while corporate variants on the same theme are seen in the following examples:

- (52) CONG: We as a congregation, and on behalf of the whole church of Jesus Christ, undertake to provide instruction of this child in the Gospel of God's love.  
(URC 1989: 39 (Thanksgiving for the Birth of a Child)).
- (53) MINISTER: Congregation,  
do you as members of Christ's body,  
and trusting in God's grace,  
promise to pray for Lucy,

provide for the teaching of the gospel,  
and live a Christian life in the family of God?

CONG: We do.

(AS 9.136-43. Infant Baptism (URC 1989: 31f. locally adapted)).

Incidentally, the archetypal question-answer format of (53), consisting as it does of a speech act which is genuinely *dialogical* and *suprasentential*, reconfirms that illocutions must be represented in discoursal, rather than purely grammatical, terms - a point we shall explore at greater length in Chapter 7.

Interestingly enough, though such Commissives are common in what may loosely be called 'rite of passage' liturgies, they seem far less prevalent in regular Sunday morning worship. Indeed, outside a baptism at Blackford Bridge (AS 9) and an Infant Blessing at High Heaton (AS 10), they are hard to detect in our Advent Sunday corpus. The following are in this sense exceptional:

(54) MINISTER: FATHER we worship you we give...our lives to you this morning...  
We offer you our very selves...

(AS 4.474-5. Extemporaneous pre-sermon prayer).

(55) MINISTER: Heavenly Father you have called us to cast off the works of darkness  
and to walk as children of the light.  
We give ourselves to this work,  
in the confidence that you will strengthen us in time of need.

(AS 8.442-5. Post-communion prayer (from Dixon 1983: 13)).

The rarity of such commissives in standard worship might seem odd given what we said in 2.4.1 about the large number of religious language philosophers



who have emphasised the implicitly 'commitmental' basis of sacred meaning. It might also seem inconsistent with the seminal attachment of Reformed doctrine to the 'covenantal' model of church subsistence. Then again, we have already stressed that Austin's fourth category of *Behabitives* could well include many utterances in which 'pledging' and 'committing oneself' to the propositional content of the speech act stands as an assumed corollary of that act, even while appearing more overtly as an expression of 'attitude' or 'feeling'. Indeed, the acts of 'giving' and 'offering' oneself to God in (54) and (55) could be said to carry their Commissive force as part of a more generally Behabitive dynamic.

With regard to Behabitives *per se*, our emphasis on the affective quality of liturgical discourse would suggest a prevalence of such types in liturgy (cf. Thiselton 1992: 299). In our Advent Sunday corpus, Behabitives cluster most noticeably into certain psychological and attitudinal types. Not surprisingly, these types in turn reflect the standard classifications of prayer and affirmation in Christian liturgiology and spirituality (cf. Selby 1986: 440-3). *Adorational* Behabitives are characteristically realised by God-oriented forms like 'we praise you', 'we worship you', 'we laud and magnify your name', and by the *Sursum corda*'s 'we lift [our hearts] to the Lord' (AS 3.28; 4.57; 6.483; 6.447-50; URC 1989: 11ff.). *Penitential* Behabitives are associated with expressions like 'we confess', 'we are sorry', 'we want to ask for your forgiveness' etc. (AS 2.408; 7.502; 10.191). *Thanks-giving* Behabitives are typically produced using 'we thank you', but also with 'we give (you) thanks', or else by a straight 'thank you' to God (AS

1.12; 3.294; 7.368; 10.424ff.; 1.166; 2.424; 4.730ff.; 5.183ff.). Then again, *Petitionary* and *Intercessory* Behabitives are most usually linked to the form 'we pray for *x*' (AS 1.218; 2.282; 3.337-40; 4.529; 6.405), but are also realised in the corpus by 'we ask that/for *x*' (1.177; 3.328; 4.60; 8.321), 'we bring *x* to/before you' (4.616; 4.694), 'we beseech you' (6.565) and 'we hold to you *x*' (3.315). Somewhat less explicitly, illocutionary acts of petition and intercession are instantiated on the Advent Sunday tapes by certain of the 'cognitive' verb forms cited in (35) - (38) above - eg. 'we remember *x*' (3.318; 10.410) and 'we think of *x*' (4.636; 5.289).

Needless to say, many of the utterances just quoted might also be analysed as conveying *Expositive* force in relation to the 'feelings and practices' generated by, or associated with, them (cf. Austin 1962: 16). Indeed, it is important to remember that Expositives, like Austin's other four classes of illocutionary force, refer not merely to linguistic action but rather to a whole range of activity - both verbal *and* non-verbal. Hence while examples (56) - (58) are clearly iconic in regard to vocal production, (59) - (62) expound activities which otherwise need no necessarily 'voiced' realization:

- (56) We ask to be forgiven  
(URC 1989: 6)
- (57) I ask your prayers for God's family throughout the world  
(AS 9.947)
- (58) We say,  
thank you Lord...  
(AS 7.592-3)

- (59) We turn to you now and to your word  
(URC 1989: 69)
- (60) Great and glorious God,  
we come again to worship you  
(AS 3.14-15)
- (61) We respond to this word, whose servants we are  
(URC 1989: 117)
- (62) And so as we stand we,  
hand back to you  
the rest of what you have given us in trust  
(AS 5.242-5)

Doubtless, the considerable overlaps and inconsistencies in Austin's classification of illocutionary acts are largely down to his illocutionary verb fallacy - the assumption that lexico-semantic distinctions could be 'mapped onto' distinctions of force, or, as Leech puts it, that 'a performative, an utterance containing an explicit performative verb, is the canonical form of utterance, the yardstick in terms of which the forces of other utterances are to be explicated' (1983: 175). This criticism reflects that made by Searle (1979a: 1-29), and though Leech may be right to detect in Austin's pupil a lingering 'isomorphism' between language organisation and social action, there can be little doubt that Searle outlines a rather more consistent set of criteria for distinguishing illocutionary forces - principally the '*point*' or purpose of the speech act; the '*direction of fit*' between its words and the world; the '*psychological states*' expressed by it; the strength with which its point is presented; differences in the way it relates speaker

and hearer; differences in its propositional content, and, vitally for our purposes, whether it requires extra-linguistic institutions for felicitous performance (1979a: 2-8). In his subsequent attempt to revise Austin's taxonomy, Searle especially highlights illocutionary point, expressed psychological states and 'direction of fit' as basic decisive factors (1979a: 12).

*Illocutionary Point* corresponds with those 'Essential Conditions' which determine what utterances are to 'count as', and which we have already related to liturgical speech acts in 5.3 above. Expressed *Psychological States* are bound up with the Sincerity Rule, likewise considered earlier. *Direction of Fit*, though, presents us with an extremely valuable principle by which liturgical illocutions might be assessed. Searle's premise here is that 'some illocutions have as part of their illocutionary point to get the words (more strictly, their propositional content) to match the world, others get the world to match the words. Assertions are in the former category, promises and requests are in the latter' (1979a: 3).

As we have seen, certain liturgical illocutions *do* either anticipate or bring about definite changes in circumstances, while others *are* expressed in such a way as to accommodate or confirm existing states of affairs. Once again, this distinction speaks to our doxological concern with the extent to which theology is 'brought along' to worship as against the extent to which worship brings theology *about* - that is, with the import of *lex orandi, lex credendi*. In combination with the other criteria mentioned above, Searle makes this distinction constitutive of his reassessed illocutionary schema. Here, *Assertives* subsume 'most of Austin's

expositives and many of his verdictives as well', their 'point' being to 'commit the speaker(s) (in varying degrees) to something's being the case' (1979a: 12-13). Their direction of fit is consequently words-to-world: they are what Leech (1980) calls 'pragmatically reflexive' - this is to say, they refer to an existing speech situation rather than instituting a new one. Liturgical examples of such Assertives would be:

- (63) MODERATOR: In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ  
the head of the church, we meet to  
commission as a lay preacher AB

(URC 1989: 101)

- (64) READER: We light the candle for ourselves,  
for the poor,  
and for everyone who longs for God to come....

(AS 7.30-2)

By contrast, the point of *Directives* is 'that they are attempts...by the speaker to get the hearer to do something' - or perhaps more precisely, to change some state of affairs in regard to some addressee. In this respect, they bear affinity with certain of Austin's Exercitives and Behabitives (Searle 1979a: 14). Their direction of fit is quite obviously world-to-words rather than words-to-world, but it is important to stress that the perlocutionary effect to which they are oriented is *envisaged*, rather than *realized by their very articulation*. As Searle confirms, their Sincerity Condition is in this sense 'wanting' or 'wishing' for some *future* outcome (1979a: 14), and they can thus be said to instantiate that 'eschatological perspective' at which Ladrière so tantalisingly hinted (1973: 61, 1.390ff.). In an ecclesiastical

setting, such Directives are most cardinally expressed by God-ward invocations, intercessions and petitions, since it is towards God that the deepest liturgical 'desires' are aimed. Certainly, Searle takes Directive illocutionary action to include sacrally relevant acts like 'requesting', 'begging', 'pleading', and 'entreating' as well as the more generic 'praying' (1979a: 14). Certainly too, God-ward Directives in worship will involve 'asking for' rather than 'commanding' since God, in His sovereign grace, is assumed to respond as he wills rather than as we insist. So, representative God-ward Directives from our field data include general invocations of God and more specific 'epiclectic' invocations of Jesus and the Holy Spirit - the latter category being particularly manifest at Holy Communion:

- (65) READER: God of the poor [...]  
interrupt our comfort with your nakedness,  
touch our possessiveness with your poverty,  
and surprise our guilt with the grace of your welcome.  
  
(AS 7: 33-40 - Extemporary Invocation realised by Imperative)
- (66) MINISTER: Lord Jesus,  
CONG: Come soon  
  
(AS 6.366-7 - General Christological Epiclesis realised by Imperative)
- (67) MINISTER: Out of your ever increasing joy,  
as the Father with the Son.  
Let your Holy Spirit come,  
to keep our praise alive.  
  
(AS 1.34-7 (Part Alan Gaunt, part extemporary - General  
Pneumatological Epiclesis realised by Imperative)
- (68) PREACHER: Come Lord Jesus,  
by: these your gifts,  
speak not only to our bodies and to our minds but,  
to our deepest being.  
  
(AS 4.484-7 - Extemporary Eucharistic Epiclesis realised by Imperative)

- (69) MINISTER:        Send down the Spirit of life and power,  
                               glory and love upon us all,  
                               upon this bread and wine

(AS 2.467-9 - Extemporary Pneumatological Epiclesis realised by Imperative)

The same basic forces are at work when requests are made for forgiveness and for God to intervene beyond worship itself - either in the daily lives of those who pray to him, or in other lives and circumstances:

- (70)                    Lord,  
                               giver of life,  
                               heal us,  
                               and free us to be truly your people.  
                               Holy Spirit speak to us,  
                               help us to listen.

(AS 2.413-8 - Extemporary Approach to Communion)

- (71)                    Reach out loving Father to (...)  
                               all who are in special need at this time,  
                               encircle them with your love.

(AS 7.559-61 - Extemporary Prayer after Communion)

Although such God-ward entreaties are perhaps the most obvious forms of 'liturgical Directive', we must not overlook the fact that many other Directives occur on a purely 'human' level, as *instructions* given by the Minister or leader to the congregation concerning what they should do next. Sometimes, these instructions are made explicit by an iconic imperative verb form:

- (72)                    Hear again the words of institution

(URC 1989: 27)

- (73) MINISTER:      Take,  
                              and eat,  
                              in fellowship with Christ and with one another  
  
                              (AS 8.431-3 - Breaking of Bread)
- (74) MINISTER:      Scripture says Christ is the one through whom we have forgiveness,  
                              accept it,  
                              believe it  
  
                              (AS 9.43-5 - Confession (Declaration of Forgiveness))
- (75) MINISTER:      Go in peace to love and serve the Lord  
  
                              (AS 6.584 - Blessing (Dismissal) (cf. URC 1989: 22))

Far more frequently, however, the Directive liturgical illocution is realised with an indicative rather than an imperative mood, and from this we see again that force is not isomorphic with sense. Here again too, Bach & Harnish's "You're under arrest" is relevant. When police apprehend a suspect, utterance of this 'institutional' locution not only 'expounds' the *action* of arrest; neither does it exhaust the exercitive 'performance' of that action; it also *tells the suspect to behave in a particular way* (Bach & Harnish 1979: 117-8). In this sense, its potential *perlocutionary* effect is both instantaneous (*qua* Expositive and Exercitive) and anticipated (*qua* Directive). A close parallel to this comes with an act we have already discussed in another regard - namely the pronouncement of forgiveness:

- (76) MINISTER:      All those who truly repent of their sins,  
                              a:re forgiven  
  
                              (AS 1.81-2)
- (77)                      God grants you the forgiveness of  
                              your sins  
  
                              (URC 1989: 7)



As we have already stressed, the context of Reformed absolution demands an uptake of personal faith-response to be effective, but the point is that in both of these instances, the penitent are instructed that they can *proceed from this juncture* to worship in a properly sanctified state. Interestingly, this *imminent* orientation of Directives *is* often brought to the surface by the future tense - and even where an apparently Expositive/Assertive present is used, the illocutionary orientation is still plainly 'soon to come' rather than 'hereby enacted':

- (77) MINISTER: We're going to sing  
number two four eight  
(AS 5.136-7)
- (78) MINISTER: We're going to praise God together and begin with Church Hymnary  
number one hundred and thirty four.  
(AS 10.8-9)
- (79) MINISTER: And so we all stand together to begin our service of worship  
(AS 2.153)
- (80) MINISTER: We drink, '  
praying that his life  
may be in us  
(AS 8.438-50)

Occasionally, the incongruity of 'semantic' and 'pragmatic' meanings is made very clear when the temporal deictic 'now' in fact operates discourse-deictically to 'cue in' what should be done next:

- (81) MINISTER: We will now sing,  
hymn number eighty one

(AS 1.208)

- (82) MINISTER: Now we will sing,  
our next hymn

(AS 7.342-3)

- (83) MINISTER: Now the children go off to their own groups.

(AS 4.354)

Even more starkly illustrative of the way Directive illocutionary forces override the lexico-grammatical sense of such 'spoken rubrics' in worship is this passage from the service at Emmanuel, West Wickham:

- (84) MINISTER: We [make our offering] now and dedicate it,  
and then we continue our preparation for the sacrament as we sing,  
the carol seven hundred..and seventeen.

(AS 2.381-90)

The presumption of grammatical-illocutionary isomorphism is even more dramatically refuted by Directives whose realisation is actually *moodless* in liturgy. Thus at the Communion in Wheatley, these noun phrases function as instructions to consume the elements:

- (85) MINISTER: The bread of heaven,  
in Christ Jesus

[Bread is shown to the congregation]

the cup of salvation,  
in Christ Jesus.

[Wine is shown to the congregation]

[Bread and wine given by elders to communicants sitting in pews...]

(AS 6. 556-9)

Similarly, the *URC Service Book* suggests the following as suitable for utterance as

Directives to consumption:

- (86)                      The body of Christ, given for you.  
                               The blood of Christ, given for you.

(URC 1989: 19).

As well as confirming Enç's (1981) thesis that nouns can be viewed deictically (the words here 'indexicalize' what is on the Lord's Table), these examples can be seen very specifically to rely on the *ritual context* in which they stand. They function as Directives rather than simply as verbless Assertives by virtue of their location in a ceremony whose linguistic actions are firmly prescribed in advance. Like 'At ease' on a parade ground or 'Time out' in a basketball match, they derive their force as commands from the institutional procedure with which they are associated. In each case, the link between the locution and the illocutionary act cannot be inferred logically: one could not 'know' that the rules of the liturgical language-game at this point stipulate eating and drinking as the appropriate response to the nominal expressions in question unless one had first 'seen how others play'.

We shall return to these issues of logical inference v conventional response in

the next Chapter, but for now we need to consider a further vehicle of Directive force which seems especially marked in liturgy. This is the *optative*. Though most usually dealt with as straight items of grammar - and most particularly as a sub-set of the subjunctive mood - Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech & Svartvik have recognised (1985: 147 (3.51); 830 (11.26); 839 (11.39); 1030 (14.34)) that optative subjunctives are very often used to mediate 'elevated' and 'fairly fixed' modes of Directive illocutionary action, and in fact bear sufficiently close correlation *with* such action that they might almost be regarded as 'pragmatic particles' *of* it (1985: 148 (3.51); 829 (11.26)). Indeed, they seem more consistently fitted to this designation than do Austin's 1st person indicative active verbs. Undoubtedly, they appear to take certain very common forms within liturgy and do so with consistently Directive force. First, there are expressions prefaced by the 'part-asking/part-ordering' formula '*Let + Object Pronoun + Verb*' - a formula which occurs in (87) - (91):

- (87) MINISTER:      *Let us pray*  
                               (AS 1.215; 2.578; 4.608; 6.15; 7.355; 8.60 etc.)
- (88) MINISTER:      *Let us proclaim the mystery of faith*  
                               (URC 1989: 16)
- (89) MINISTER:      *Let us eat together,*  
                               *and be thankful.*  
                               (AS 7.627-8 - Distribution of Bread)
- (90) MINISTER:      *Let us keep the feast*  
                               (URC 1989: 18)

- (91) Let's dedicate our gifts to God,  
let's...stand together to do that

(AS 5.227-8)

(cf. Quirk *et al* 1985: 148 (3.51); 829 (11.26)).

Here, the first person plurals again emphasise a 'priesthood of all believers': the Minister is not an 'army general' figure, giving orders to his 'troops' in the second person without having to follow them himself; rather, the 'Let us' optative confirms him as an *equal participant* in the actions he prescribes. Of course, this expression of solidarity is not unique to liturgy and is a common tool of rhetorical 'pathos' (cf. Churchill's 'Let us go forward together'). Nonetheless, it remains one of the most identifiable markers of liturgical speech action. This is not least, perhaps, because its *agency* seems somewhat widened from the sort of cognitive intention and reception implied by straight imperatives: by 'letting' something happen rather than wholly 'making' it happen, there is a sense of predetermination - or even providence - about the activity in question, which is commensurate with a ritual of which God is assumed to be in ultimate control. Even where the pronoun becomes third rather than first person, the same sense of formal, institutionalized premeditation is detectable:

- (92) MINISTER: If any know of any reason why A and C may not now lawfully be married to each other, let them now declare it.

(URC 1989: 52)

More complexly, other optative Directives are used not only with the force *wishes for* but also *conferrals of* something. These often take the verb 'to be', and the liturgical paradigm case here is *blessing*. Blessings may be obvious and 'strong' as in (92) and (93), or 'weaker', as in (94):

- (92) MINISTER:      The blessing of God Almighty,...  
                              the Father..the Son and the Holy Spirit,  
                              be with you now,  
                              and always  
                              (AS 6.585-9 cf. URC 1989: 22)
- (93) MINISTER:      The blessing of the God of Sarah and Abraham  
                              the blessing of the Son, born of Mary,  
                              the blessing of the Holy Spirit who  
                              broods over us as a mother over her children,  
                              be with you all.  
                              (WCC 1983: 102).
- (94) JNR CHURCH:    The Lord be with you  
      LEADER  
      CONG.:            And also with you<sup>7</sup>  
                              (AS 1.190-1)  
                              (cf. Quirk *et al* 1985: 839 (11.39); 1030 (14.34)).

As with other 'liturgical optatives', the illocutionary point here, while obviously 'expectational', is also to some degree 'actualizational'. Searle may have defined Directives as oriented towards some *future* outcome, but there is a sense in which the blessings in (92) - (94), are simultaneously 'hoped for' *and* 'delivered', and in which the perlocutionary effect is both 'now' and 'not yet'.      This tension

---

7. For more detail on blessings as speech acts, see Wonnemberger 1984.

between what language specialists call the *perfect* and *perfective*, or *punctual* and *durative aspect* of expressions thus clearly reflects that 'eschatological perspective' which Ladrière perceived in liturgical discourse, but which he failed to relate to specific patterns and structures of language-use.

Insofar as they accomplish as well as anticipate action, 'optative Directives' possess the quality of Austin's Exercitives: they are most often uttered by someone with 'ministerial' authority. What is more, this 'minister' operates within a tri-polar dimensionality whereby s/he at the same time invokes God and assigns His grace to a 'worshipper' or worshippers. Then again, the directions of force within this 'triangle' are occasionally such that it is *God Himself* who becomes the object of *His people's* blessing:

- (95) MINISTER:      Blessing and honour,  
                                 and glory and power,  
                                 be to our God  
  
(AS 4.836-8 (based on URC 1989: 13, 16)
- (96) MINISTER:      Blessed be your holy name for ever  
  
(AS 6.415)

Another version of the optative often used with Directive force in Christian worship is that which deploys the modal auxiliary *may* - an auxiliary which could have readily preceded any of the examples (92) - (95) and, with syntactic rearrangement, (96) as well, and which actually occurs in our corpus in the following forms:

- (97) MINISTER: May we know that he:  
is Immanuel,  
the God who is with us.  
  
(AS 8.381-3)
- (98) READER: May the Lord  
add his blessing  
to the reading  
of his holy Word  
  
(AS 4.392-5)
- (98) May God, the source and giver of love,  
fill you with all joy and peace  
  
(URC 1989: 59)
- (99) May we grow together in unity and be  
built up into the body of Christ  
  
(URC 1989: 43)

As (99) confirms, the '*may*' form, like the '*Let + Object + Verb*' structure, is also prevalent in petitionary and intercessory prayer - perhaps because it makes the God-ward desire of the Directive that much more explicit:

- (100) May we be fruitful throughout all our days  
  
(URC 1989: 110)
- (101) Strengthened by this assurance, may we  
return to the duties which  
await us in the world  
  
(URC 1980: 80)  
  
(cf. Quirk *et al* 1985: 147-8 (3.51)).



In such cases, the optative again helps to register liturgical discourse in an eschatological perspective. It allows a desired 'perlocutionary effect' to be envisaged even while mediating the Directive illocution of 'requesting'. This teleological thrust is made even more patent when the modal 'mays' and 'mights' occur as part of a purposive *'that'* clause - a phenomenon which can be heard at least 30 times on the Advent Sunday tapes:

(102) MINISTER:      And we pray for Gill and for Alan,  
                               for Richard and for Andrew,  
                               that they may be given these gifts of patience and wisdom,  
                               which come by belonging to the people of God.

(AS 10.259-62)

(103) PRYR 2:        Let us pray for ourselves,  
                               and for all God's people,  
                               that our words, attitudes and actions,  
                               may commend the gospel.

(AS 7.430-3)

(104) MINISTER:    Open our eyes and our hearts to hear you,  
                               that we may continue to be,  
                               your servants,  
                               and may do your will,

(AS 3: 340-3)

If human Directives to God are the most obvious type of Directive to be found in worship, it can also be seen to include a number of Directives issued *from* God to the congregation. An example would be the reading of the Decalogue - which the Reformers revived as a liturgical staple after long neglect (Davies 1948: 267; Nichols 1968: 15-16), and which we have already seen presented as a major basis

of the service at Warsash (AS 5.387ff). Like many other sacral lections, this might be interpreted as God ordering or 'instructing' His people. The same might also be said about the articulation of contemporary prophecies or 'words of knowledge' in Charismatic and Pentecostal churches (Davies 1984).

Though Searle retains Austin's category of Commissives and confirms that they reveal an obvious world-to-word fit, it is worth at this juncture taking note of Thiselton's (1992: 300ff.) fertile insight into the *theological* significance of those paradigmatic 'promissory' illocutions which distinguish this category and which are so prominent in Biblical (and 'rite of passage' liturgical) discourse - namely that they '[bridge] the gap between what 'is' and what 'ought to be'. This is to say, in contrast with Assertives, Commissives are *self-involving* and *participatory*. Both as uttered by God in His covenantal relationship with His people and as articulated by believers in worship, promises constitute deeds which are once again 'eschatological'- simultaneously 'shaping the identity' of the Christian and 'creating the reality of the new creation'. This is significant for us not least because Calvin's understanding of sacraments as 'promises' is a keystone of his doxology. He makes it clear that a sacrament is 'an outward sign by which the Lord seals on our consciences the *promises* of his good will towards us in order to sustain the weakness of our faith' ([1559] 1960: IV.14.1). Later, he notes that just as Old Testament 'sacraments' like circumcision, purification and sacrifice had their origin in the sealing of divine 'covenants', so New Testament sacraments are instituted in the context of God's 'promise' embodied and renewed in Christ (IV.14.20). Not

only this: both 'old' and 'new' covenantal promises are set by Calvin in an explicitly eschatological perspective; they mediate present assurances of future fulfilments (II.10.16). As Vincent (1979: 153) points out, within this view of sacramental promising Calvin 'defines the realm of theology in terms of the realm of the Word: in promising, the God who promises manifests Himself as Transcendent One and yet simultaneously *involves* himself in His own Word; His presence is actual, but it is the actual presence of a God who remains transcendent - of a God for whom presence in the human realm is the presence of the Exalted One ("The Lord")'.

Insofar as this promise thus communicates 'presence, prevenience and transcendence', Vincent points out that not only in the language of Calvin but also in the language of 'contemporary theology', 'we would speak of the *eschatological* dimension of the sacrament'. Certainly, Ladrière bears this out when he speaks of sacramental discourse facilitating for the believer 'a resumption of the mystery of Christ, the acceptance of salvation and hope of benefits yet to come' (1973: 62, 1.411-2). As we have seen, it is a human desire for these promises to be *fulfilled* which is typically expressed in optative Directive requests.

Now while Searle's first three categories of illocutionary acts are defined by one direction of fit or another, his fourth class, which he dubs *Expressives*, are perceptible as having no direction of fit at all:

In performing an expressive, the speaker is neither trying to get the world to match the words nor the words to match the world, rather the truth of the expressed proposition is presupposed. Thus, for example, when I apologize for having

stepped on your toe, it is not my purpose either to claim that your toe was stepped on nor to get it stepped on. (1979a: 15).

According to this definition, Expressives are introspective along the lines of those Austinian Behabitives which we have already analysed. Specifically, they articulate 'the psychological state specified in the Sincerity Condition about a state of affairs specified in the propositional content' (1979a: 15). After Leech (1983: 52), we might conceivably propose 'mental states' as a 'world' parallel with the 'worlds' of physical objects, social conditions and objective facts, and might thereby imply that Expressives 'fit' words *to* this psychological world. Nevertheless, the delimitation of the class itself would not be affected by such a move, and that there is a distinct set of 'self-referring' liturgical illocutions - from 'rejoicing' and 'celebrating' to 'knowing' and 'loving' - seems beyond dispute.

While Searle's first four modes of illocutionary action are plainly well represented in liturgy, it is his fifth class of *Declarations* which is most seminally manifested in the discourse of worship. According to Searle, the defining characteristic of this class is that 'the successful performance of one of its members brings about [a] correspondence between propositional content and reality, [guaranteeing] that the propositional content corresponds to the world' (1979a: 16-17). This is to say, 'Declarations bring about some alteration in the status or condition of the referred to object or objects solely in virtue of the fact that the declaration has been successfully performed' (1979a: 17). As we have seen, this 'saying makes it so' quality was most strongly linked by Austin with his Exercitives

- a connection which is made clear when Searle recognises that Declarations likewise typically gain their force from some 'authority' or 'executive power', this power having been vested in the speaker by virtue of his/her 'official position' (Austin 1962: 154; cf. Searle 1979a: 18-19). Hence, as he illustrates it, illocutionary acts like appointing, nominating, declaring war, sacking, excommunicating and bequeathing will be 'successful' only when performed in the context of an 'extralinguistic institution' - one in which the relevant speakers and hearers occupy 'special places' (1979a: 18). This insight is echoed by Hancher (1979: 3), who comments that it is typically 'social institutions' which 'both authorize declarations and derive identity from them'. Not surprisingly, Searle and Hancher alike cite the church as a classic example of just such an institution, and while Searle limits his exemplification of ecclesial Declarations to 'excommunicating', we have ourselves dealt with several other sacral illocutions which would fall into this category: eg. baptizing, marrying, ordaining, inducting a Minister, consecrating the elements etc.. This link in fact confirms a crucial point articulated by Warnock (1973) and Leech (1983: 179) alike - namely that *Searle's Declarations are actually what Austin (1962: 5) first thought of as performatives per se*. Furthermore, Leech is also probably right to suggest that even in his later refinement of the performative in terms of five 'illocutionary forces', Austin rather overemphasised such institutional usage within the whole range of human speech activity. Indeed, it is almost certain that Declarations are in this regard 'the exception rather than the rule' (Leech 1983: 179). On this very basis, Searle,

Warnock and Leech alike criticise Austin's blanket assignment of illocutionary acts to 'conventional' circumstances. Warnock argues that there is little comparison between the speech actions of, say, bequeathing, which is tied firmly to the legal system, and asking 'What time is it?', which is regulated at a purely 'semantic', rather than socially-specific, level. In the same vein, Searle comments that 'Austin sometimes talks as if all performatives (and in general theory, all illocutionary acts) require an extra-linguistic institution, but this is plainly not the case' (1979a: 18).

Meanwhile, Leech takes an even more decisive step, arguing that Declarations might be viewed not only as 'atypical' and 'exceptional', but as 'not illocutionary acts at all' (1983: 180). He goes on:

[Declarations] are conventional rather than communicative acts: the linguistic parts of rituals. The sense of the words may, but need not, indicate their part in the performance: if the conventions were suitably altered, one could name a ship by reciting a poem, or by eating a cream bun. Such examples are reminders that linguistic declarations (as Searle himself notes) are often paralleled by non-verbal declarations, like the raising of an umpire's finger, or the bang of an auctioneer's gavel. As Searle points out, declarations have no sincerity conditions [1979a: 19]; the only way in which they can fail to take effect is through the failure of one or more of the accompanying conditions of the ritual (for example, when a marriage is performed by a layman impersonating a priest). Searle is right in saying that 'Declarations are a very special category of speech acts' (1979a: 18-19). They are 'performative' in the sense of 'action performing', in a more obvious sense than is true of illocutionary performatives like 'I promise to be there' (1983: 181).

Leech's stance here mirrors that which we saw Blakemore adopt with respect to baptism - namely, that declarations, whether secular acts like resigning, repealing and declaring open, or liturgical acts like ordaining, anointing, marrying, consecrating and dedicating, are only 'incidentally linguistic' and so belong more

within 'a theory of social institutions' than within a theory of communication or 'pragmatics' (Blakemore 1992: 93). But as we have already intimated, this critique simply fails to do justice to the complex *interdependence* of verbal and non-verbal ritual in the Declarations of church worship. Baptism is not the only instance of a 'deed' which would simply be void without a particular form of words: Leech seems to assign the possible infelicity of Declarations purely to the absence or misapplication of 'parallel' extra-linguistic action, but as we have already seen from Martinich (1975a: 302), they can just as easily be invalidated by a disregard for designated verbal formulae - that is, by violation of a 'Locutionary Act Condition'. From this point of view, Leech's 'poem' and 'cream bun' scenarios completely miss the point: utterance of 'I ordain you', 'I declare you to be husband and wife' or 'We commit his body to the ground' may not be *sufficient* conditions for proper Christian ordination, marriage or burial, but they are certainly *necessary* ones. In particular, to attempt baptism without using some form of the verb 'I baptize' followed by the preposition 'in' and a 'divine name', would itself nullify the procedure, even if every other detail of the ceremony was appropriately executed. It is just not conceivable that a completely different sort of locution might be introduced without radically altering the ritual itself - let alone that the locutionary act element might be abandoned altogether and replaced by a newly-agreed non-verbal 'cue'. Granted, some liturgical Declarations might allow a certain *lexemic* and *syntactic* variation - the proclamation of marriage may exchange 'man' for 'husband'; absolution may be confirmed using the overt 'I absolve you' or the more

covert 'Your sins are forgiven' -, but as Martinich has confirmed (1975a: 302), the *spread* of acceptable locutions will still be restricted in terms of reference and (often) in terms of sense. Then again, even subtle differences in surface form may bespeak important *denominational* and *doctrinal* divisions: the East/West split in the Medieval church was mirrored by respective baptismal formulae in the passive and active voices (Fisher 1986: 56), while different branches of Pentecostalism can be identified according to whether they baptize in the name of the Trinity, in the name of Christ alone, or solely 'in the name of the Father' (McDonnell 1986: 71).

Clearly, then, we cannot accept with Leech and Blakemore that liturgical Declarations simply 'happen to involve' language. No doubt the 'institutions' and non-verbal rituals of worship drive and shape the words which are used; but there is also a very real sense in which the words *themselves* identify and validate those institutions and rituals. As we suggested earlier, this pattern of interrelation is epitomised by the particular insistence of Reformed theology on the essential interaction of 'Word' and 'sacrament' in worship - the conviction that physical rituals such as baptism and the Lord's Supper cannot stand apart from language but are, rather, 'pictorial representations' of God's 'discourse' with humankind, and that they must be 'explained' as such. The poverty of Blakemore's account of baptism is compounded in this regard when she goes on to suggest that baptismal illocutions, far from being 'explicatory' or 'communicative', are little more than ceremonial ciphers, making for an initiation rite which can be 'successfully performed in the presence of an uncomprehending audience or in the presence of no audience at all'



(1992: 92). This analysis would have John Calvin and his successors baulking since it is a fundamental principle of Reformed doxology that the sacraments can *only* have perlocutionary effect in the presence of a congregation, and must always be 'made comprehensible' by appropriate accompanying speech acts (Heppe 1950: 608ff.; von Allmen 1965: 42ff.; Old 1992: 127ff.). Leech, too, begs further confusion in regard to the interpenetration of verbal and non-verbal ritual in liturgy when he compares Declarations on the one hand to 'sacraments', and on the other to 'magical acts such as casting spells' (1983: 180) - a connection which is also implied by Hancher (1979: 3). Bearing in mind what we have been saying about 'causative' occult formulae, these two 'parallels' must surely be seen as contradictory, rather than compatible, in Christian worship, and in Reformed worship in particular. Somewhat closer to the reality we are investigating is Searle's explicit acknowledgement that the 'illocutionary fit' of Declarations is *bi-directional* in precisely the way we have been describing:

The performance of a declaration brings about a fit by its very successful performance...[but]...the direction of fit is both words-world *and* world-to-words...Declarations do attempt to get language to match the world. But they do not attempt to do it either by describing an existing state of affairs (as do assertives) nor by trying to get someone to bring about a future state of affairs (as do directives and commissives). (1979a: 18-19, my emphasis).

It is no mere coincidence that the language of bi-directionality here parallels the 'bi-directionality' of the *lex orandi, lex credendi* relationship as mooted by Wainwright (1980: 58, 218) - a relationship in which the 'world' of theology is both

brought along *to* and brought about *by* the performed 'words' of worship (cf. Auer 1992). No doubt, sacral Declarations appear to iconicize this reciprocity quite transparently, but before becoming too sanguine about such connections, we must recognise that they are far from clear-cut, and that they assume quite varied forms and intensities.

In our consideration of Austin's Expositives, we saw that whereas his list of examples restricted the 'expounding' function of illocutions to *linguistic* action (as in 'testify', 'report', 'explain', 'conclude by' etc.), there must also be a sense in which they might expound *non-verbal* activity. The word-to-world dimension of Searle's (overtly institutional) class of Declarations clearly attends to this latter phenomenon. He does, however, still recognise the distinctive nature of language-related expositions and in fact treats them as one of two 'classes of exceptions to the principle that every declaration requires an extra-linguistic institution' (1979a: 18). Thus, although 'pleading the eternal sacrifice' is transparently a *liturgical* illocution even while being a language-oriented Declaration<sup>8</sup>, 'asking to be forgiven' is far less ecclesiastically 'marked', despite its membership of the same class. Indeed, there may in this respect be some sense in attempting to distinguish 'conventions' from 'institutions' - despite the fact that Searle's critique of Austin's 'radical conventionalism' (cf. Recanati 1987: 67ff.) appears to treat them as synonymous.

---

8. For a more detailed discussion of this phrase's retention by the 1989 URC *Service Book* see Kennedy & Tovey 1992: 5.

Developing the intuition from their 'everyday' meaning that on a *cline* of 'situational constraint', conventions tend to be less socially structured and regulated than institutions, we might say that *whereas institutions will always produce conventions, conventions may not necessarily derive from institutions*. By this standard, Expositives (Austin) or language-oriented Declarations (Searle) could be 'conventional' without being necessarily 'institutional'. So we might say that apologizing is relatively conventional in the sense that it will be identifiable principally as a *linguistic* ritual, but that 'confessing sins' is relatively institutional in that it is much more closely bound to a discrete social body - the church. This modification of Austin and Searle is consistent with that proposed by Sandy Petrey (1990: 64). It is also more subtle than Tilley's inferring from Habermas (1979: 38) a polarisation of religious speech acts as *either* 'institutionally bound' or 'institutionally free' (1991: 33-81) - that is, of marriage and baptism as belonging to the former category and petitionary prayer, preaching, pledging, swearing, and confessing as belonging to the latter. Even if theoretically helpful, one would still have to qualify this distinction by accounting for the fact that certain ritual speech acts are institutionalised in relation to *more than one institution*: thus, 'committing a body to the ground' is mainly done in churches and chapels, but can form part of a Humanist funeral rite; and the legal vow of marriage is a requirement of both church *and* Register Office weddings.

Habermas himself in fact acknowledged such ambiguities - although he still wrongly aligned marriage to a 'single institution' (the church) 'which is, however,

found universally' (1979: 39). Then again, even where speech acts are very firmly tied to the *ecclesia*, one wonders how exactly the 'institution of the church' might be defined in relation to sacral speech. If it is to include as a prerequisite the building in which worship takes place, what of 'open air' services and baptisms performed in a local river? If it is to rely instead on the presence of particular 'officials' exercising designated roles, what of the move towards more 'democratic' and flexible models of leadership adopted in English Independency and Radical Puritanism? If it is to be sought in the use of a statutory prayer book, what of the Dissenters' eschewal of imposed rites in favour of extemporary discourse?

These qualifications reflect an important point made by both Tambiah (1979) and Fenn (1982: 124-39) - namely that merely placing the speech acts of church worship on a conventional-institutional scale is to run the risk of crude sociological reductionism - of ignoring precisely the qualities which *distinguish* liturgical discourse as 'sacred' from the comparably institutionalised discourse of secular bodies like courts, auction houses etc.. Yet again, this confirms that a 'pragmatics of liturgy' must take account of 'theological theories', or doctrines - and most especially, the doctrine of the Word of God as it is understood and presented in liturgy. On this basis, it is particularly relevant to our concerns that Searle cites as a second exception to his institutional 'rule' for Declarations the possibility that they might be 'supernatural': so 'when eg. God says "Let there be light" that is a declaration', but it is not bound as such to any 'specific bureaucratic organization' (Searle 1979a:18; cf. Petrey 1990: 64). As we have seen, though they might

incidentally be uttered in a local church, illocutionary acts like prophecy, words of knowledge or the recitation of 'oracular' Scripture texts could be said to 'transcend' the institution of the church itself, deriving as such from the 'mouth of God', rather than from any ecclesiastical authority (cf. Matthew 4:4). The Reader who ends the lesson 'Thanks be to God for His Word', or the prophet who concludes 'Thus saith the Lord' clearly underline this view. More generally, even the apparently less 'supernatural' discourse of the sermon is elevated by much Reformed theology into a sacramental re-presentation of the *verbo dei*: the Second Helvetic Confession ([1556] 1931: 237-8 (Ch. 1)), for instance, simply reflects mainstream Reformed liturgiology in its assertion that 'the preaching of the Word of God is the Word of God' (cf. Barth [1936] 1975: 88ff.; von Allmen 1965: 142; Nichols 1968: 31-3).

Now linguistic pragmaticians might very well contend that it is not their job to pursue the sort of 'essentialistic' distinction between 'divine' and 'sacred' discourse that we have just contemplated (cf. Samarín 1976: 5). This, they might add, is the task of the philosopher of religion or the dogmatician. But even if we follow Jeffner (1972) and confine our treatment of doctrine purely to examining its role as a contingent 'correctness condition' on liturgical illocutions, it is still clear that we can leave neither its metaphysical domain of reference, nor the beliefs it presupposes unanalysed, since these are bound to contribute to our understanding of such things as Sincerity, propositional content rules and 'uptake' in the actual *function* of liturgical discourse. Thus, while it would be wrong to claim that liturgical pragmatics can be done by 'believers' alone, there is a real sense in which

the liturgical pragmatician needs also to be a theologian, rather than just a gatherer and describer of empirical data; or, as Ravenhill puts it in another way (1976: 37): the application of speech act theory to 'practical religion' will require an approach which 'mediates between cosmology and sociology'.

\*

It should by now be apparent that when 'superimposed' on liturgy, even Searle's 'improvement' of Austin's taxonomy of illocutionary acts raises as many questions as it answers. Neither, following Wunderlich (1979: 297), should we suppose that there will be a substantially 'clearer' model among the range of alternative classifications which have been proposed since (though where thought helpful, these will enter into our subsequent discussions (cf. Hancher 1979: 4)). The reasons for this become clear as we review the problems and limitations of a purely 'speech act' based pragmatics of liturgy, and seek to resolve these difficulties by pursuing a more catholic methodology adapted specifically to our purposes.

## 5.6 Key complications for a speech act analysis of liturgy

From our discussion so far, certain key difficulties have emerged-difficulties which apply to speech act theory and pragmatics in general, but which are likely to have a particular bearing on liturgic exegesis. Chief among these are: Indirectness; Multivalency and Truth v Felicity. It will be helpful now to consider each of these more specifically.

### 5.6.1 Indirectness

As we have seen, Austin failed sufficiently to develop his insight that speech acts should be classified according to 'force' rather than according to grammatical criteria. Indeed, apart from a few isolated exceptions (1962: 62), he demonstrated different forms of illocutionary action with reference to different classes of 'illocutionary verb'. Nevertheless, as we have also seen, later pragmatics (and most notably Leech (1983)) have made the distinction between 'sense' and 'force' much clearer, and have in turn accounted more consistently for those instances where 'performativity' is conveyed through means other than 'isomorphic' syntactico-semantic forms. In liturgical contexts, we have particularly seen Directives realised by indicative and moodless and optative sentences rather than by imperative structures - eg, 'The children will leave us'; 'The body of Christ,

broken for you'; 'The Lord be with you' etc. . Likewise, certain Declarations have been shown without first person agents - eg, 'Your sins are forgiven'.

Both Searle and Leech alike relate force to the putative *indirectness* of illocutions - that is, to those instances where 'face-value' semantic meaning, or sense, appears to be incongruous with 'pragmatic' or 'utterance' meaning. Even more saliently, both Morgan (1978: 266-74) and Brown & Levinson (1987: 70-1) have underlined that such indirectness can often be *conventionalised* into clear social and institutional rituals - particularly those which attempt to uphold formal principles of *Politeness*. A classic instance often cited in this regard is 'Can you pass the salt?' used as a Directive command mitigated for the sake of 'manners' by an interrogative syntax ( Searle 1979b: 36ff.; Morgan 1978: 261ff.; Allen 1986: 207). Parallels to this kind of strategy are not hard to find in our field corpus:

- (105) MINISTER: Will you help me to pray?  
(AS 2.535)
- (106) MINISTER: Shall we;...further worship God  
with our offerings  
(AS 6.40-1)
- (107) WORSHIP:  
LEADER Would you like to stand  
(AS 5.5)

Now there is a case for arguing that the prevalence of such indirect illocutions in worship is symptomatic not only of its inherent 'formality' as a sacred ritual, but



also, of that perceived need for 'reticence' in the presence of God which Smith & McClendon (1972: 59) pinpoint as a key perlocutionary goal of worship discourse. Then again, perhaps we should not be too surprised by such 'indirectness', given that the essential *discontinuity* of sense and force is, after all, a major factor distinguishing pragmatics from syntactics and semantics. Besides, while the incidence of 'indirect' strategies in our corpus may be common, they do not seem particularly more marked than in the quotidian rituals researched across different cultures by Brown & Levinson (1987). In any case, as the American literary critic Stanley Fish has robustly contended (1980: 284-92), the appearance of 'directness' or 'normative force' in sentences whose form and reference *seem* commensurate with their normal 'function' may in fact be an illusion, since even 'what is normal (like what is ordinary, literal, everyday)' is *itself* a *function* of the circumstances in that it depends on the expectations and assumptions that happen to be in force'. Fish goes on to argue that in this sense "normal" is context specific and to speak of a normal context is to be either redundant (because whatever in a given context goes without saying *is* normal) or incoherent (because it would refer to a context whose claim was not to be one)' (1980: 287).

Fish is certainly right to point out that Searle's early work on 'indirectness' (1979a: 30-57) drove an unwarranted wedge between 'literal' and 'indirect' meaning - especially in view of the fact that Searle's own Propositional Content Condition had so clearly stressed the *dependence* of propositional meaning on contingent illocutionary force (Fish 1980: 284). Latterly, however, Searle's collaboration with

Daniel Vanderveken on the 'foundations of illocutionary logic' (1985: 179ff.) has seen the direct/indirect distinction 'factor out'. Even for our purposes, though, Searle & Vanderveken recognise another problem which arises from speech analysis and which we have already touched on in our own investigation of liturgy. This problem arises from the fact that the illocutionary point of certain speech acts seems to be 'systematically ambiguous' (1985: 181). Let us look at this phenomenon more closely.

#### 5.6.2 Pragmatic ambivalence

We have already noted in passing that some liturgical illocutions seem to exert *more than one force at the same time*. In the sacral contexts of our transcripts, utterances like 'We praise you' and 'We thank you' seem simultaneously Expressive, Declarational and 'Expositively' Assertive. Credal utterances - whether prefaced by 'We believe' or not - seem not only to 'express' personal faith but also to 'assert' the institutional 'faith of the Church'; they also carry a Commissive force by virtue of the fact that to 'confess' such faith is assumed to bind one existentially to the truth of what is affirmed (cf. Ladrière 1973: 56-8; Mananzan 1974; Thiselton 1992: 305). Then again, a eucharistic Assertive like 'We drink / praying that his life may be in us' (AS 8.438-9) 'doubles up' as a Directive command to the congregation to consume and a Directive petitionary request to God.

In an early study of such pragmatic pluralism, Fraser (1971: 3ff.) developed a concept of *force multiplicity* for certain speech acts. Subsequently, Searle & Vanderveken (1985: 181ff.) have written of 'hybrid' illocutions, and Leech & Thomas (1990: 195) of *multivalency* and *pragmatic ambivalence*. What is more, together with Brown & Levinson (1987: 70-1), Thomas (1986) has recognised that various utterances might not only be *taken* but also deliberately *meant* in two or more ways - particularly, and once again, to uphold particular social conventions. Consistent with all this, Tilley (1991: 34) has hypothesised that pragmatic ambivalence is especially marked in *liturgy*, where it is often very necessary to mediate more than one force at the same time. Thinking particularly of a Catholic Bishops' letter, he notes that 'when institutional authorities make assertions, their audience may take their utterances as directives or declarations as well. This is because the authorities occupy positions from which others in the institution reasonably and normally expect to hear declarations of doctrine and directives concerning personal matters.' Tilley recognises three main types of force-multiplicity in the letter he analyses: Assertive Declarations like 'we write this letter from the perspective of the Catholic faith'; Directive Declarations like 'we expect Catholics to give our moral judgements serious consideration', and Commissive Declarations like 'we, for the cause of peace, commit ourselves to fast and abstinence on each Friday of the year'. It should already be clear, however, that our much larger corpus reveals considerably more, and more complex, categories of

multivalent illocutionary action. Let us now identify and exemplify each of these in a more systematic way.

#### 5.6.2.1 Assertive-Directives

In this category, 'reports' and 'comments' on the action of the church service itself serve also to instruct the congregation as to what they should do or say next:

(108) MINISTER: And now we're going to pray the prayer that you have,  
on the smaller sheet of paper

(AS 2.271-2)

(109) MINISTER: the response...after the words Lord Jesus,  
i:s for you to say,  
come..soon.

(AS 6.367-9)

(110) MINISTER: The broken bread,  
the broken Christ.  
For you.

[Distribution of bread]

(AS 2.513-5)

### 5.6.2.2 Assertive-Commissive Declarations

In a sense, all Commissives are simultaneously Assertive and Declarational, since verbally uttering a 'promise' or 'pledge' involves both a 'statement' of the promise's propositional content *and* the effecting of a correspondence *between* that propositional content and the reality of one's own commitment:

(111) MINISTER: We seek  
new life,...

(AS 2.409-10)

(112) MINISTER: Lord as we go from this place,  
we will meet with you.

(AS 4.845 - Prayer after Communion)

### 5.6.2.3 Assertive-Expressives

We have seen that sheer acts of 'stating the gospel' can have both Assertive and Expressive force in liturgy. Given the extent to which Reformed doxology and *Ladrière* alike stress the dependence of liturgical language performativity on 'faith', and even accepting Tilley's proviso that such 'faith' might vary in cognitive intensity, simple citations of Scriptural or doctrinal propositions

can be seen to operate in this way, whether 'scripted' as in (113) and (114), or 'extemporary' as in (115) and (116):

(113) ALL: Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

(AS 6.491 - Benedictus (based on Matthew 21:9)

(114) ALL: Christ has died  
Christ is risen  
Christ shall come again

(AS 4.833-5 - Ascription of Glory (Church of England 1980: 132; URC 1989: 13, 16)

(115) W. LDR 2: He loves us to sing new songs  
throughout the psalms its saying,  
SING a new song unto the Lord,

(AS 5.177-9)

(116) MINISTER: We've seen lots of different aspects of,  
the: abilities of God,  
the way that God is able to do all these wonderful things.  
God is able to give us grace,  
God is able to open our eyes  
God is able to humble the proud,  
even to raise the dead those,  
who are spiritually dead in one way,  
those who are...really dead.

(AS 10: 327-35)

Those leading worship are charged at many points with 'speaking for all' and this appears to involve both *assuming* and *asserting* the 'thoughts and feelings' of the congregation towards God:

(117) MINISTER: We are aware of the gulf between us and you,

(AS 2.296)

- (118) MINISTER: It is our fault,  
that..things have come to this pass.  
For we and our fathers,  
have not honoured you,  
  
(AS 5.345-8)
- (119) MINISTER: We long to meet you  
  
(AS 7.34)
- (120) MINISTER: No longer need we desperately hope for the best,  
for we have the assurance of your love.  
  
(AS 9.19-20 (From Dixon 1983: 17)

#### 5.6.2.4 Assertive-Expressive-Commissives

It has emerged from our investigation that when structured more formally into 'creeds', Assertive-Expressive discourse will either *effect* commitment, or else more typically mediate *re*-commitment to, or 'affirmation' of, truth-claims made already:

- (121) We believe in one living and true God,  
creator, preserver and ruler of all things in heaven and earth  
  
(URC 1989: 115 - Confession of Faith)
- (122) We believe that  
Christ gives his Church a government  
distinct from the government of the State.  
  
(URC 1989: 118 - Statement of the Nature, Faith and Order of the URC)

Similarly, the many 'I do' and 'I will' responses made by protagonists in 'rite of passage' ceremonies like baptisms, weddings, ordinations etc. confirm that liturgical promising, like promising in general, will characteristically entail the 'affective' or 'psychological' self-involvement associated with Expressives. Certainly, we have made it clear that insincere Commissives uttered in such circumstances would seriously 'abuse' the rite in question.

#### 5.6.2.5 Assertive Declarations

This class of illocutions was actually envisaged by Searle himself (1979a: 19-20). He saw that 'some institutions require assertive claims to be issued with the force of declarations in order that the argument over the truth of the claim can come to an end somewhere and the next institutional steps which wait on the settling of the formal issue can proceed'. As examples, Searle gave a judge's 'pronouncing' judgement ('You have been found guilty'), an American football umpire's uttering 'touchdown', a head of state declaring war and an official 'nominating' someone to a post, as in 'The above-named candidate is duly elected'). Assertive Declarations are thus closely allied with Austin's Exercitives - although Searle's point about their place in the *segmentation* and *procedure* of the language-game is a valuable development.

Now in liturgical discourse, 'validity claims' are characteristically assumed in



advance rather than decided 'on the spot', so Searle's exposition is of limited value in our case. Having said this, there is a sense in which *all* Declarations are also Assertive, since in Searle's own definition they must effect a 'correspondence between [their] *propositional content* and reality'. Certainly, it should be clear by now that 'I declare you to be husband and wife' or 'I baptise you' will function as proper Declarations only if at the same time they truthfully 'assert' the existence of a valid bride and groom or a duly sanctioned baptismal rite.

#### 5.6.2.6 Assertive Expressive Declarational Directives

As well as *referring to* 'psychological states' which are *brought along* to worship by participants, Expressives can also relate to the worship going on *at any given moment* in the service. As such, they can function as Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices with regard to contingent affective liturgical activity:

(123) MINISTER: We want to ask for your forgiveness as we come today  
(AS 10.191)

(124) MINISTER: We realise our unworthiness to approach you O God  
(AS 2.501)

(125) MINISTER: Father we acknowledge that,  
everything we have received,  
you have given us.  
(AS 5.228-30)

In these examples, there is further ambiguity as to whether 'wanting', 'realising' and 'acknowledging' are simply durative psychological states being 'commented on' assertively in language, or whether such states are actually *instantiated* by the language itself as it is used. In the latter case, they would have to be classed as Declarations, but it would be unwise to select either at the expense of the other: the force ambiguity means that we must talk here of Assertive-Expressive Declarations. Even this, however, fails to recognise that such speech acts might also be viewed as 'prompts' by the Minister as to what the congregation should think, feel or do. This, of course, is the definition of a Directive, so it is quite possible to posit a *four-way* force multiplicity in such instances. The same tetrapartite polyvalence attends the following examples:

(126) MINISTER: Heavenly Father as we: draw  
near to this table we draw near to you.

(AS 4.610-11)

(127) MINISTER: We hurt each other  
we are sorry for it

(AS 2.407-8)

\*

The high level of pragmatic ambivalence in liturgy not only bears out its complexity as a speech event type; it also raises fundamental questions about the location of 'truth' in sacral discourse. From a negative viewpoint, we might doubt

whether 'meaning', which seems so often 'probabalistic' and 'indeterminate' in worship, can ever be 'pinned down' sufficiently to make the *lex orandi* a reliable source of the *lex credendi* in the way that Kavanagh, Power and Fageberg propose. More positively, however, we could argue that it is precisely *because* religious language-functions are so often and so necessarily multivalent or 'numinous', that liturgy is exactly the most appropriate medium for the expression and instantiation of Christian theology. A corollary of this would be to say that since church service discourse must meet the needs of a diverse body of people with very different intents and commitments, it has developed a force multiplicity *commensurate with* this diversity.

Can these two perspectives - the first essentialistic, the second pluralistic and context-driven, be reconciled? It is to this question that we now turn.

### 5.6.3 Truth v felicity in sacral discourse

So far, we have stressed the value for liturgical study of linguistic pragmatics, and have set this over against the logical-positivist dismissal of religious discourse as 'non-verifiable' and thus 'meaningless'. On the other hand, we cannot ignore the dangers for liturgiology in a sociolinguistic relativism which would seek to reduce matters of 'truth' and 'falsity' wholly to 'cultural conventions' or 'institutional norms'. Austin himself was considerably exercised by the question

of truthfulness and 'facticity' vs 'felicity' and 'appropriateness' in speech acts. Indeed, in the penultimate lecture of *How to Do Things with Words*, he tackles this question with specific regard to the dissolution of his original constative/performative duality:

Can we be sure that stating truly is a different *class* of assessment from arguing soundly, advising well, judging fairly, and blaming justifiably? Do these not have something to do in complicated ways with facts? The same is true also of exercitives such as naming, appointing, bequeathing, and betting. Facts come in as well as our knowledge or opinion about facts...But consider for a moment whether the question of truth or falsity is so very objective. We ask 'Is it a *fair* statement?', and are the good reasons and good evidence for stating and saying so very different from the good reasons and advice for performative acts like arguing, warning and judging? Is the constative, then, always true or false? When a constative is confronted with the facts, we in fact appraise it in ways involving the employment of a vast array of terms which overlap with those that we use in the appraisal of performatives. In real life, as opposed to the simple situations envisaged in logical theory, one cannot always answer in a simple manner whether it is true or false. (1962: 142-3)

As examples of such 'uncertainty' Austin cites 'approximations' like 'France is hexagonal', synecdoches like 'Lord Raglan won the battle of Alma' and generalisations like 'All snow geese migrate to Labrador', each of which may be regarded as 'partly' true even if not 'literally' so. More recently, Leech has seen the same problem attending rhetorical devices such as hyperbole and litotes (1983: 145-6). In both sacred and secular discourse, however, it is in the realm of *metaphor* that traditional definitions of truth and falsity seem least adequate. As Gill (1969: 36) points out, Austin's eventual conflation of constatives and performatives

...opens the way for an exploration of the role played by metaphor in the logic of God-talk. If ever there was a type of utterance capable of carrying multi-dimensional meaning, it is most certainly closely related to metaphor. By this time of day it ought to be clear that metaphorical language cannot be dismissed as 'merely emotive' or 'cognitively unnecessary'. Not only is our everyday discourse shot-through with metaphor, but even the exact sciences can be shown to fall back on concepts and terms - 'models' - which cannot be defined either in terms of other concepts, or in terms of observations.

Unfortunately, Austin himself fails to develop his own analysis of metaphor beyond a vague impression that it is somehow 'abnormal' and/or 'parasitic' upon 'serious' speech (1962: 104). Searle (1979a: 76-116; 1979b) more specifically prefers the designation 'non-literal' to 'non-serious', reserving the latter term for *whole discourses* which (like novels) are suspended from the usual principles of reference, and noting that individual metaphors can occur 'as much in...nonfiction as in...fiction'. Searle's guiding principle is that metaphors show a marked *disjunction* between 'sentence meaning' and 'utterance meaning' (1979b: 94; 100; 120), such that addressees have 'to contribute more to the communication than just passive uptake' (1979b: 123). This is to say, these addressees must invoke 'the general rules for performing speech acts' in order to grasp the metaphor's force (1979b: 121). As we have seen, once the invocation of such rules becomes central to the definition of 'meaning', classical delineations of 'truth' and 'falsity' are prone to complication and modification along 'pragmatic' lines. Searle recognises this, but is still unwilling to relinquish truth-conditional criteria altogether. Indeed, he posits an analysis in which metaphors display *two-fold* semantic content - first in relation

to their (literally false) 'surface' denotation and second in relation to their (true) underlying denotation:

The basic principle on which all metaphor works is that the utterance of an expression with its literal meaning and corresponding truth conditions can, in various ways that are specific to metaphor, call to mind another meaning and corresponding set of truth conditions. The hard problem of the theory of metaphor is to explain what exactly are the principles according to which the utterance of an expression can metaphorically call to mind a different set of truth conditions from the one determined by its literal meaning, and to state those principles precisely and without using metaphorical expressions like "call to mind". (1979b: 99).

In essence, the solution Searle proposes here is based on defining varieties of what Leech (1969: 155) calls commonness of *Ground* between the actual or perceived semantic content of the literal sentence (or *Vehicle*) and the actual or perceived semantic content of the underlying utterance (or *Tenor*) (cf. Searle 1979b: 116-120). The drawback of such an approach, however, is that it assumes both *too rigid* a correlation of 'truth' and 'falsity' with 'utterances' and 'sentences' respectively, and *too synthetic* a dichotomy between the 'literal' and the 'figurative' in metaphor. Indeed, as both Burgess (1972) and Soskice (1985: 93-6) have shown, *religious* metaphors are typically and notoriously 'irreducible' to distinct literal and non-literal components. 'Redemption' and 'salvation' are, for example, much more than mere 'figures' of God's action towards humanity: rather, they have come to acquire a whole complex of discrete dogmatic denotations *in their own right*. Hence, despite Searle's insistence that metaphor 'does not require any conventions' (1979b: 121), it would seem that the metaphoric language of the church community

defies his merely 'semanticist' decomposition and necessitates instead an analysis which takes full account of *socially* and *institutionally* specified meanings. From this point of view, Petrey (1990: 68) is right to imply that it is Austin's insistence on illocutionary force as 'the work of a community', rather than Searle's assignment of it to individual intentionalities, which offers a more positive paradigm for 'corporate' non-literal discourse. Indeed, it is significant in this regard that it is precisely when tackling non-empirical speech that Austin comes closest to what Recanati (1987: 81-5) calls 'strong radical conventionalism' - the notion that 'meaning' and 'truth' in *all* linguistic communication is *situationally* contingent and *contextually* determined:

It is essential to realize that 'true' and 'false', like 'free' and 'unfree', do not stand for anything simple at all; but only for a general dimension of being a right and proper thing to do as opposed to the wrong thing, in these circumstances, to this audience, for these purposes and with these intentions...The truth or falsity of a statement depends not merely on the meanings of words but on what act you were performing in what circumstances...(1962: 145).

Clearly, although Austin is quick to disassociate his approach from slogans like 'The truth is what works' and thus from post-Peircean philosophical pragmatism (1962: 145), his comments can only appear as a profound challenge to the notion that religious discourse might convey any 'absolute' or 'universal' verities, or that liturgy could be anything more than culturally conditioned. Certainly, in applying his model to the language of creeds - which might be thought more literal and propositional than that of most other sacred registers - Mananzan (1974: 56; 121-8)

feels compelled to disavow 'essentialistic' approaches and confines herself instead to an analysis which is 'situational and functional' - that is, to 'studying the actual uses of the creed in different contexts and characterizing its forces as speech act or acts' (cf. Samarin 1976b: 5). Similarly, Smith & McLendon (1972: 60-1) invoke Austin when challenging the 'propositionalist' approach to religious discourse:

...Consider [this] proposal: Someone says 'Let's cut the chatter about language, conditions etc., and get down to the nitty-gritty. Does God exist or doesn't he? If there are reasons to think so, give them to me; if not, shut up shop. Why bother with anything else until that is settled?' Passing for a time over the unsatisfactory state of all such proofs and the (not irrelevant) reasons for that unsatisfactory state, let us note a presupposition of the objection. Our objector asks us to get away from all this talk about talk. What is it, however, which he wants us to get away from? Grammar, structure, diction? But that is not the way in which we were talking about talk. Does he then want us to transcend the linguistic, ie. the human, condition? No theist ever made an emptier plea for transcendence than that would be. Are we to get to some discourse which is not confined to the conditions of discourse? To go on and say something without bothering whether in the nature of the case it *can* be said? It sounds so. 'Just state the facts, please; does God exist, or no?' But is that the kind of thing which can be stated? Not everything can be, as Austin pointed out...At least it is noteworthy that Hebrew and Christian scripture releases no statements about God, though it does issue many speech acts about him. (1972: 61).

Though the final sentence here begs many questions of definition, we can at least recognise that even avowedly Reformed scholars have in large numbers come to accept the inadequacy of a 'propositionalist' hermeneutic. For Karl Barth ([1936] 1975: I.1: 109-10; 120-1; 143ff.), God's Word must be understood as much more than empirical description: rather, it 'becomes active' within the dialogical context of church life and worship. Subsequently, Torrance (1988: 49-50) and Seerveld (1988: 92-5) have echoed a widespread concern that propositionalism runs the dual risk of turning Christian faith into a religion based on pseudo-scientific assertions and textual idolatries, while Rogers & McKim (1979) have maintained that though



such tendencies have been evident in 'Protestant Scholasticism' from the mid-Seventeenth Century onwards, they do not reflect the level of concern shown by Calvin and Luther for the *function* of Holy Writ in the contextualised discourses of corporate praise and proclamation. Furthermore, even staunchly conservative scholars like Frame (1974) and Godfrey (1983) are sceptical about predominantly positivistic approaches to God's Word. Coming from a Reformed perspective, these accounts are naturally more focussed on the text of Scripture than on the discourse of liturgy *per se*, but their conclusions are easily applied to traditions like Roman Catholicism, Anglicanism and Eastern Orthodoxy, where the language of *worship itself* is more 'canonical' and apparently more universal in its inherent propositionality. Then again, the issue here is not so much whether worship discourse is *wholly* or even *mainly* propositional, or whether it is intrinsically or post-doctrinally propositional, but whether it is propositional *at all* - whether, indeed, it is *ever* possible for liturgy to mediate 'univocal truth'. Barth at least allowed that Christian discourse, 'proclaimed in the church' might display a propositional character 'from time to time' ([1936] 1975: I.1. 156ff.); but even this position is threatened by Austin's apparently thoroughgoing 'sitationalism'. As we have already hinted, Searle seems more sympathetic in this regard: while maintaining that they must be 'expressed' with illocutionary force and so themselves constitute something of an abstraction, he nevertheless retains 'propositions' as a determinate class underlying actual speech acts - one whose generality and truth-conditionality is confirmed in his assurance that the *same*

proposition might be realised by a *variety* of utterances (1969: 29-30). In addition, his aforementioned exemption of 'supernatural speech' from institutional dependency (1979a: 18) would seem more conducive to a theo-logical reading of worship discourse - one in which an eternal 'divine Word' is seen as sanctifying 'human words' in such a way that they can articulate stable cosmic truths.

Before we set Searle too sharply against Austin, though, we should acknowledge that for Austin, 'context' could be much more than purely parochial or 'local'. In a key definition, he stresses that: 'The *total speech act* in the *total speech situation* is the *only actual* phenomenon which, in the last resort, we are engaged in elucidating'. (1962: 148, first 2 emphases mine; 3rd emphasis Austin's).

Ultimately, of course, 'the total speech situation' might be proposed as 'the church worldwide' or 'the historic liturgical tradition' - so it is at least *theoretically* possible that one or more of its 'total speech acts' will have a *global* or *transtemporal* propositional content. Having said this, the sheer plurality of denominations, congregations and individual worshippers makes discerning such propositional content a process fraught with difficulties. Now a lucid treatment of just these difficulties is offered by Jeffner (1972). Jeffner argues that religious performatives may be classed as variously 'unproblematic', 'problematic' or both, depending on the extent to which the validity of their respective 'truth-claims' is taken to affect the validity of the whole speech act. There is an obvious link here to Austin's perspicuous classification of 'infelicities' (1962: 15-20), but it will be recalled from our earlier discussion that his approach to this matter was still

predicated on degrees of deviation from norms which were *conventionally* and *ritualistically* determined, rather than on degrees of deviation from absolute, 'de-contextualisable' truths. Furthermore, even when Austin proceeds to consider how felicity might be affected by 'correspondence with the facts', he adheres to that version of Strawsonian presuppositionalism in which 'truth' and 'falsity' have genuine meaning only in relation to particular utterances in particular discourse situations (1962: 47-52). More specifically, Austin holds that the so-called 'Reference Conditions' which pertain to 'true statements' actually operate in the same way as the 'appropriateness conditions' which pertain to 'successful performatives'; then in keeping with his conviction that 'stating' is in any case a form of action, he concludes that the former are more properly subsumed into the latter, and most especially into his Condition A.2 concerning the 'appropriate circumstances for the invocation of particular procedures' (1962: 15).

If all this appears to shift the ground of linguistic philosophy from ontology to epistemology, from realism to idealism, and from essentialism to voluntarism, Austin confirms as much when, building on his Condition  $\Gamma.1.$ , he takes such things as 'knowledge', 'thought', 'belief', 'intention' and 'sincerity' to be vital components of 'the total speech situation' rather than mere adjuncts to it (1962: 15; 43-5; 48-50). As Gill confirms (1969: 31), 'the traditional view dichotomizes language (thought) and action (reality), whereas Austin's view blends them in a functional manner.'

The problem this raises for the study of *liturgical* language is clear: though worship discourse may make numerous apparently 'universal' propositions (eg.

about God's existence or the nature of human sin), these must be *analysed* as no more than the 'agreed conventional idioms' of a particular speech-community (again cf. Samarin 1976b: 5). Further still, even where the speech community in question may be very large and the 'propositions' uncontentious, Austin insists that 'Reference' will still always depend on 'knowledge at the time of utterance' (1962: 144), and will thus always be *contingently* rather than *necessarily* determined. Following Austin, Fish (1980: 291-2) proposes that although 'a sentence' cannot mean 'anything at all', neither can it 'always mean the same thing'. Rather, he maintains, it 'always has the meaning that has been conferred upon it by the situation in which it is uttered'.

Also taking its cue from Austin, Jeffner's three-fold division of 'religious performatives' is a division based on *degrees of consensus* about what 'counts as' true rather than on *degrees of truth value per se*. Hence *unproblematic religious performatives* are those which have 'common' and 'complete' perlocutionary effect without necessitating the acceptance of 'any religious statement, or any special religious convention' (Jeffner 1972: 90 cf. Austin 1962: 15). So even atheists could accept a priest's pronouncement that a couple be 'husband and wife' because they 'can deny that the priest has any special religious authority, and find his prayers and blessings ridiculous, but still accept that he has the legal mandate to declare people married' (1972: 90). By the same token, 'Many Christians - for example Lutherans - also agree that no circumstances dependent on the Christian revelation are necessary for a marriage to be created by a priest' (1972: 90).

By contrast, *problematic religious performatives* are those whose felicity is directly dependent on personal commitment to an assumed belief-system. Thus believers and non-believers alike will probably agree that intention-oriented speech acts like covenanting, vowing and confessing sins, and reception-oriented speech acts like absolving, rely for their efficacy on the *faith* which interlocutors bring to them (1972: 90).

Thirdly, and most interestingly, Jeffner identifies certain religious performatives as inviting interpretations which are *both unproblematic* and *problematic*. The instance he uses to illustrate this 'mixed' category is by now very well known to us:

...think of a priest who utters 'I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost', to a child, acting according to the ritual of baptism. Everyone must admit that he is uttering a performative and people with a different theology and outlook on the world can agree that the performative is used correctly. It is really a true statement that the priest is baptizing. But is it possible for a religious man and an atheist who are in agreement as to the correctness of the use to agree also as to the correctness-conditions in this case? This is an empirical question, and the answer is that it is often impossible. An atheist may say that acceptance of certain conventions concerning the solemn naming of a child is sufficient for us to be able to say that the priest baptizes in the situation described. But a religious man will generally add that the performative is misused if God does not in some way take account of what is done by the uttering of the performative. If this is not the case, he will say that the priest did not really perform a baptism in saying 'I baptize'...This means that a religious man will add certain special correctness-conditions, which the atheist is not bound to accept.

It is also true that different religious persons have different ideas in regard to the content of these additional claims. This is well-known from the history of the Christian church. The additional correctness-conditions generally accepted by religious men include sentences which are candidates for the problematic set of sentences, for example sentences concerning actions of God. (1972: 91)

Now from a *doxological* point of view, the major problem with Jeffner's classification, as with the Austinian approach to religious discourse in general, is that it tends ultimately towards a *fideistic* hermeneutic. This is to say, it represents truth-claims as faith-descriptions and reduces statements about God to utterances about worshippers' *belief in* God. This problem has been acknowledged by Ramsey (1968: 183ff.) and by Gill (1969: 33ff.). At the same time, however, their response to it is far more constructive than might be imagined - and as such, suggests a crucial paradigm for our own study. Both alike infer from Austin the major 'epistemological turn' mentioned earlier - that is from bare logical empiricism to a perspective in which 'self, thought, language, action and reality are conceived as *points on a continuum*, rather than as totally distinct ontological entities' (Ramsey 1968: 170; Gill 1969: 33. My italics). More specifically, they each see this shift as compatible with the key proposal of Hungarian scientist and philosopher Michael Polanyi (1891-1976), who reflected the claims of religious philosophers like Zurdeeg (1958), Ferré (1962) and Knox (1966) that for *all* assertions, whether religious or non-religious, truth is always a function of personal *commitment* and that traditional polarities between 'fact' and 'value' should thus be abandoned (Polanyi 1958, 1961; Langford 1966):

...only a speaker or listener can mean something *by* a word, and a word *in itself* can mean nothing. When the act of meaning is thus brought home to a person exercising his understanding of things by the use of words which describe them, the possibility of performing the act of meaning according to strict criteria appears logically meaningless. For any strictly formal operation would be impersonal and could not therefore convey the speaker's personal commitment. (1958: 252, cf. Austin 1962: 60; Ramsey 1968: 169; Gill 1969: 36).

If this appears to anticipate speech act theory, Polanyi seems more Austinian than Searlian in his conviction that notions of 'truth' and 'falsity' cannot be confined to merely 'abstract' propositions, but must instead be extended to the use of language by specific people in specific contexts:

...if '*p* is true' expresses my assertion of the sentence *p*, then '*p* is true' cannot be said to be true or false in the sense in which a factual sentence can. '*p* is true' declares that I identify myself with the content of the factual sentence *p*, and this identification is something I am doing, and not a fact that I am observing. The expression '*p* is true' is therefore not itself a sentence but merely the assertion of (an otherwise unasserted) sentence, the sentence *p*. To say that '*p* is true' is to underwrite a commitment or to sign an acceptance, in a sense akin to the commercial meaning of such acts. (1958: 254).

For T.A. Langford (1966: 47), Polanyi's work takes even explicitly 'scientific' or 'empirical' investigation 'into a context that insists upon the dimension of personal decision and commitment', even where (as in the church), 'commitment' is to an already-established or institutionalised set of values. The echoes of Austin sound even clearer when Langford makes the following observation:

Polanyi has argued that we have no more reliable grounds for our knowledge claims than these acts of personal discrimination, whether they are our own or those to which we happen to subscribe personally, since appeals to 'objective fact', 'empirical data' or 'formal rules of explicit inference' are, at bottom, no more than what a community of enquiry accepts them to be (that is, when members of this community are acting as persons making claims having universal intent). Hence, logically, these appeals have the same sort of backing and are no less precarious than other types of personal decisions. Far from altering the procedures by which we would know and do scientifically, this is merely a description of the means by which we have, in fact, worked and prospered in science, notwithstanding the regnancy of general misdescription. The first result of this investigation is, then, the assertion of the primal place that personal expectation, hope, and commitment have in every act of knowing. (1966: 47).

Now from one point of view, Polanyi's insistence on the 'personal participation of the knower in all acts of understanding' (1958: vii) appears radically and problematically affective. This is to say, while it allows us to close the positivistic distinction between literal, factual or 'meaningful' language and the 'meaningless' or 'non-verifiable' language of religion, it does so by a seeming *universalisation* of subjectivity. While this might make for the rehabilitation of religious language as a suitable subject for *linguistic* study, it hardly resolves the theological issue of *divine revelation* as mediated through a transcendent λόγος, since this still carries with it associations of a God 'out there' - a God who operates even 'above and beyond' Gill's anti-empiricist 'continuum' of God-*talk*; a God who in Frame's succinct phraseology, is 'Lord - even of human language' (1974: 175). That this is Calvin's God, and the God of classical Reformed theology, is beyond dispute, for here our words are subject to, and sanctified by, an eternal 'Word of God' which 'lasts forever' (Calvin [1559] 1960: I.13.8; Davies 1948: 49-56).

Now despite appearances to the contrary, Polanyi in fact disavows subjectivism. The way he does so is, however, somewhat inscrutable:

[The personal participation of the knower in all acts of understanding] does not make our understanding *subjective*. Comprehension is neither an arbitrary act nor a passive experience, but a responsible act claiming universal validity. Such knowing is indeed *objective* in the sense of establishing contact with a hidden reality; a contact that is defined as the condition for anticipating an indeterminate range of unknown (and perhaps yet inconceivable) true implications. (1958: xiii-xiv).



As Ramsey soundly argues (1968: 196), Polanyi's exposition of 'hidden reality' here merely begs the sort of 'reference questions' he had originally set out to resolve. Indeed, Ramsey goes so far as to assert that 'we do not ourselves make contact with, establish our hold on some 'hidden reality'. To suppose that is to make a myth-eaten error. Rather does the 'hidden reality' establish contact with us by disclosing itself to us'. Although Ramsey's concept of 'disclosure' is presented as something rather more general than Christian 'αποκάλυψις' - being defined as 'a cognitive situation which breaks in on us as we survey a series of verifiable criteria' (1968: 177) or even, to paraphrase crudely, a realisation that 'wholes' are greater than the sum of their 'atomic parts' (1968: 171ff.) -, there can be little doubt that when applied to liturgical discourse, it would incorporate the orthodox, Biblical doctrine that not only worshipping, but also *faith itself*, are 'gifts of God' (Rom 12:3). Here, Ladrière very much comes back into the picture, insisting as he does that 'if faith is the reception of the Word and if liturgical language receives from faith its characteristic performativity, that language is itself an echo of the Word' (1973: 62). Into this brief comment, indeed, there is compressed a wealth of potential for our own study - not least in the sense that Ladrière therein suggests both a challenge to, and a rapprochement with, Reformed conceptions of Word and faith in worship. In the Chapters which follow, we seek to realise this potential by showing how, as it has developed *beyond* the 'classical' speech act theories of Austin and Searle to which Ladrière was limited, modern pragmatics offers an even more sophisticated framework for the analysis and understanding of worship

discourse, and most particularly from our perspective, of worship discourse in the Reformed tradition.

## CHAPTER 6

### THE WORD COMMUNICATED: LITURGY, IMPLICATURE AND RELEVANCE

#### 6.1 From speech acts to interaction

We have shown that Austin recognised the importance of *uptake* in the felicitous performance of speech acts (1962: 117-8). We have also pointed out that in Searle's schema, most speech acts require the collaboration of a 'Hearer' in order to be effective (1969: 66-7). We have in turn related these insights to the importance attached by both Reformed doxology and the work of Ladrière, to 'faith response' as a prerequisite of true liturgical enactment - even while recognising that from a pragmatic point of view 'faith' must in this case be understood *corporately* and *institutionally* as well as individually and cognitively, and that it may thus vary in strength between 'unproblematic' assent to ritual *behaviours*, and a more 'problematic' assent to the 'claims' or 'assertions' expressed *in* the act of worshipping. Having made these points with regard to classical speech act theory, we are nonetheless compelled to ask more specifically *how* a 'worshipping Hearer' might receive and interpret the speech acts of liturgical celebration. Clearly, it is one thing to say - as the Reformers said in reaction to the Latin Mass - that any worthwhile liturgy must be 'comprehended' by those who participate in it. It is quite

another to explore the *means by which* that comprehension takes place.

Since the work of Austin and Searle in the '60's, pragmaticians - most notably Searle himself (1979b: 32), Bach & Harnish (1979), Leech (1983: 30) and Sarangi & Slembrouck (1992: 117) - have suggested that the most appropriate means of extending speech act theory in the direction just described would be to incorporate H.P. Grice's definitive work on *implicature* (1975) into a wider analysis of language and *communication*.

Most recently, Grice's own ideas have been radically modified by Sperber & Wilson (1986, 1987), whose theory of communicative *Relevance* has been cast by Leech & Thomas (1990: 201) as 'perhaps the most significant development in pragmatics over the last few years', and which has been embraced by Diane Blakemore as a new basis for the subject in her 1992 'Introduction to Pragmatics' *Understanding Utterances*.

To date, only Warner (1990) has given serious consideration to how the study of implicature and relevance might benefit interpretations of liturgical discourse. Though perspicuous, his findings are fairly brief and tentative, while his engagement with actual examples is limited to barely half-a-dozen portions from 'service book' prayers, plus a few Biblical passages. It is our belief that this whole 'communicative' aspect of 'liturgical pragmatics' warrants more thorough investigation, and that our own corpus allows us to advance such an interpretation in a fresh and helpful way.

## 6.2 Implicature and Liturgy

Grice's work on Implicature can be seen as developing a century of logico-philosophical work on *presupposition* by Frege ([1892] 1952), Russell (1905), Strawson (1950, 1952) and others (cf. Levinson 1983: 167-225). Then again, where both Frege and Russell had spent considerable time seeking a formal, symbolic analysis of the 'propositions' which are 'entailed' and 'presupposed' by 'linguistic objects' or 'sentences' such as 'the King of France is bald', Grice also took account of the move of Strawson and other ordinary language philosophers away from purely formalist and 'anti-metaphysical' explications of linguistic meaning, and recognised with them that 'there are very many inferences and arguments, expressed in natural language, and not in terms of [symbolic logical] devices, that are nevertheless recognizably valid' (1975: 43).

Ostensibly, Grice's work claims to favour neither one of these two approaches over the other, but rather maintains that the assumption of divergence between the two rests on a common misapprehension or 'mistake' - a mistake which 'arises from an inadequate attention to the nature and importance of the conditions governing conversation' (1975: 43). Expanding on a distinction mooted in an earlier paper (Grice 1957), Grice argues that a proper account of meaning must take into consideration not only what is *said* (that is referential or truth-conditional meaning analysed in traditionally logical terms), but also what is *meant* or 'implicated' at the same time. Although a concept of 'implication' is present in Strawson<sup>1</sup>, Grice

---

1. For more detail on this implication/implicature distinction see Leech 1981; Leech & Thomas 1990: 183.

applies implicature specifically to his own exposition of saying/meaning - an exposition which begins with the following illustration:

Suppose that A and B are talking about a mutual friend, C, who is now working in a bank. A asks B how C is getting on in his job, and B replies *Oh, quite well, I think; he likes his colleagues and he hasn't been to prison yet*. At this point, A might well inquire what B was implying, what he was suggesting, or even what he meant by saying that C had not yet been to prison. The answer might be any one of such things as that C is the sort of person likely to yield to the temptation provided by his occupation, that C's colleagues are really very unpleasant and treacherous people, and so forth. It might, of course, be quite unnecessary for A to make such an inquiry of B, the answer to it being, in the context, clear in advance. I think it is clear that whatever B implied, suggested, meant etc. in this example, is distinct from what B said, which is simply that C had not been to prison yet. (1975: 43).

Here, it is plain that Grice has moved away from an exclusive focus on language (whether artificial or natural), and towards a recognition that meaning in communication depends heavily on such matters as 'general knowledge' and 'shared contextual knowledge'. In 2.2.3, we saw how Dell Hymes ([1971] 1972) extended the domain of 'competence' in linguistics from syntactic structures and semantic 'types' to whole situations of utterance; Grice suggests something similar in another illustration:

Suppose someone to have uttered the sentence *He is in the grip of a vice*. Given a knowledge of the English language, but no knowledge of the circumstances of the utterance, one would know something about what the speaker had said, on the assumption that he was speaking Standard English, and speaking literally. One would know that he had said, about some particular male person or animal X, that at the time of the utterance (whatever that was), either 1) X was unable to rid himself of a certain kind of bad character trait or 2) some part of X's person was caught in a certain kind of tool or instrument (approximate account, of course). But for a full identification of what the speaker had said, one would need to know a) the identity of X, b) the time of utterance and c) the meaning, on the particular occasion of utterance, of the phrase *in the grip of a vice* [a decision between 1) and 2).] (1975: 44).

It is significant for *our* purposes that Grice highlights his argument at this point with reference to the interpretation of a potential metaphor, for it is axiomatic that any linguistic analysis of religious discourse must take metaphoric inference seriously if it is to be sensitive to the operation of such discourse . So, what Grice says about context and background information with regard to 'He is in the grip of a vice' (57-8) can be seen as applicable to the following 'dual-purpose' URC prayer, written for use in the baptism of both infants and adults, and for ceremonies based on both sprinkling from a font and full immersion in a baptistry:

- (1) MINISTER:       We pray that A..., who is washed in this water,  
                              may be made one with Christ in his death

(URC 1989: 33).

Here the reference to 'washing' is figurative for both classes of candidate and for both modes of baptism, but to different degrees. Whereas an adult undergoing full immersion is 'washed' literally as well as spiritually, this could hardly be said to the same extent where a baby's forehead is merely dampened in the sign of the cross. This in itself does not validate one mode of baptism over another, but it does confirm the need to infer the meaning of liturgical-linguistic signs very clearly from their use by specific people at specific times on specific occasions. Our High Heaton transcript reveals a similarly representative instance of what Grice refers to when the Minister prays using the following Assertive Declarational Directive:

- (2) O Holy Spirit  
we bow before you now,  
  
(AS 10: 363-4)

As Horton Davies makes clear (1948: 61-4), physical forms of obedience like kneeling and bowing were widely eliminated from worship by the English Puritans, and this exclusion of kinesic ritual persists in today's Reformed churches. Certainly, the High Heaton congregation are shown as 'sitting' for the petition which ensues, and short of this being an oblique reference to 'bowing our heads in prayer', we must assume, as they clearly do, that this is a metaphorical indicator of *psychological* submission to God rather than the literal description or 'stage direction' it might have been in a more 'High Church' rite.

Now if this confirms the need for a proper treatment of non-literal/non-referential linguistic communication in liturgy, Grice goes on to propose that as well as general, contextual and mutual knowledge, participants in discourse must have regard to what he calls *The Co-Operative Principle (CP)*:

Make your contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged. (1975: 45).

Subsequently, Bach & Harnish (1979: 12-15) have spoken in similar terms of the *Communicative Presumption* of discourse. Although the 'CP' is most obviously applied to casual conversation, Grice does suggest that it would work for discourses 'whose purpose may be fixed from the start', whose consequent structure may be



'fairly definite', and whose constituent elements are marked in some way as 'suitable' (1975: 45). From this point of view, it is significant for liturgy, which we have already begun to see following predetermined patterns even when not based on a fixed prayer book, and which is clearly emerging as an archetype of 'appropriate' linguistic behaviour. Indeed, while Grice's work remains largely theoretical, both Holdcroft (1979) and Sarangi & Slembrouck (1992) have suggested that his concept of implicature might well be extrapolated and adapted for *institutionalised* discourses.

From its initial articulation, Grice reifies the CP into four key *maxims* (1975: 45-6) - maxims whose designation he derives from Kant's categories of reason. First among these is a *Maxim of Quantity*. This entails two 'sub-maxims':

1. Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purposes of the talk exchange).
2. Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

Secondly, Grice proposes a *Maxim of Quality*. This he expresses as 'Try to make your contribution one that is true'. Specifically, he defines this as adherence to the following:

1. Do not say what you believe to be false
2. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence

Third comes a *Maxim of Relation*, expressed simply as

Be relevant

Fourthly and finally, Grice identifies a *Maxim of Manner*, defined in four main terms:

1. Avoid obscurity of expression
2. Avoid ambiguity
3. Be brief
4. Be orderly

Although Grice's Maxims are presented as most specifically and primarily connected with the purposes of 'talk exchange', he goes on to conjecture that still further ones might be added - particularly in order to account for the 'aesthetic, social or moral' dimensions of discourse (1975: 46-7). In fact, he offers the suggestion that 'Be Polite' would be a notable member of this group. As we saw in 5.6.1, politeness has indeed developed as a major concern within sociolinguistic pragmatics; more particularly, it has provided an especially valuable focus for the study of *ritual* communication (Leech 1983: 107-14; 131-42; Brown & Levinson 1987; Sarangi & Slembrouck 1992: 121-22).

Now in one sense, Grice's maxims have a fairly direct application to liturgy. In terms of Quantity, we might well say that liturgical language must communicate its messages *efficiently* and *sufficiently* between members of the congregation. Particularly in Free Church worship, preachers *can* be unnecessarily prolix, intercessors *can* unwisely try to deal with too many world crises in a single prayer, and choruses *can* be repeated beyond a point where repetition has any discernible

creative or pedagogic value. Conversely, if it is true that a primary feature of 'ritualization' in discourse is *ellipsis* (Couture 1986: 86-7), then one must also accept that church rites can become so restrictively 'coded'<sup>2</sup> that their 'informativeness' is reduced - at least to a point where those not entirely familiar with the liturgical system get 'lost' or become confused. In both cases, the Quantity Maxim may be 'violated' and worship impoverished as a result (cf. Grice 1975: 49). The following observation from Louis Bouyer is apposite in this regard:

There actually are religious forms in which the rite has, as it were, absorbed and assimilated the word, and there are on the other hand forms where the words have practically suppressed the rite. In ancient Rome, for example, there were cults such as those of the Salian priests in which the sacred words had lost all their meaning even for the priests. In a sense they had become nothing more than verbal rites. Conversely, in some extreme forms of Protestantism, the merely spoken word has taken the place of ritual and sacraments. In both cases, little enough is left of religion. In the former, it has degenerated into senseless superstition, and in the latter it has exhausted itself in a kind of religious intellectualism. (1963: 54).

Bouyer's insights are readily borne out not only from the history of Reformed worship, but also from our own field data. On the one hand, there is no doubt that Calvin and his successors reacted vigorously to what they perceived to be 'senseless superstition' in the discourse of the Mass. Not only was it offered in Latin by often classically ignorant priests to people who were frequently illiterate even in their own language; it was in any case widely recited out of earshot of the congregation (Crichton 1986b: 365). In Calvin's terms, the result was a ceremony reduced to a series of indecipherable symbols - a language-game which had long

---

2. Liturgical discourse 'coding' will be dealt with more specifically at 8.6.2.

ceased to be 'in play' for all but an ecclesiastical élite. As we have been highlighting, this critique stemmed substantially from Calvin's conviction that Roman doctrine had mistakenly assigned inherent 'power' to the words of liturgy rather than to the transcendent Word of God which endows those words with meaning, and to the faith which makes that meaning effective in the lives of the elect ([1559] 1960: IV.14.14-15). As a result, he portrayed priests as 'muttering like sorcerers' - casting 'spells' to which few were drawn by understanding, and many more by 'superstition' (McDonnell 1967: 132). Moreover, we have already seen how a similar reaction against 'intralinguistic causation' led many English Puritans to reject fixed forms of words altogether.

However exaggerated and polemicised, these 'anti-ritualistic' stances clearly informed both Calvin's own rites, and those of the English Reformed churches which followed in his wake. As well as translating liturgy into the vernacular and insisting upon an audible and accessible rite, the recovery of a central place for 'expository preaching' in these services bespoke a core commitment to worship as a genuine act of *communication* between 'Minister' and 'people' on one level, and 'God' and 'Church' on another (Davies 1948: 182-3; Nichols 1968: 18-21; Old 1984: 69-85; Wolterstorff 1992: 287-8). As Richard Baxter put it in his classic handbook *The Reformed Pastor*, this re-establishment of the sermon was effected in order 'to speak so plain, that the ignorant may *understand* us' ([1655] 1956: 74, my emphasis).

While in itself commendable, this revival of sacral communication through

proclamation, teaching and 'explaining the Word' can be seen more negatively to have threatened the Quantity Maxim in regard to *other* parts of worship beyond the sermon itself. Leaving aside debates about the relative 'lengthiness' and 'prolixity' of Puritan preaching (Davies 1948: 193-203), a tendency to 'over-inform' *does* seem to have been a consistent feature of Reformed worship since its inception - and this appears to have been particularly apparent in English Reformed worship, where reliance on extemporary speech has been especially high. No doubt, this can be put down to over-compensating for the erstwhile 'impenetrability' of the Mass, but even committedly Reformed liturgists agree, if not about its exhausted intellectualism, then certainly about the excessive 'didacticism' of their tradition's worship (Routley 1960: 108-12; Mayor 1972: 27; Spinks 1984b: 82). In Wolterstorff's terms, this has led to no less than an 'overwhelming' of the 'worship dimension' of Reformed church services by the 'proclamation dimension' (1992: 297).

In the next Chapter, we shall see that this tendency has manifested itself very distinctively through the widespread replacement or transformation of 'responsive' and 'dialogical' forms by more overtly expository, monological discourses. Here, we note more generally that the drive to 'footnote', 'editorialise' and 'teach' through non-homiletic Reformed liturgy is pervasive in our Advent Sunday transcripts just as it became a hallmark of Sixteenth Century Calvinist worship. So, the opening few lines of Calvin's own *Collect for Illumination* - an innovation from his 1542 Geneva rite - provide, *en passant*, a dense disquisition on the providence and

uniqueness of God, the doctrine of atonement, human sin, the means of grace, soteriology, pneumatology and Christology:

- (2) We pray thee now, O most gracious and merciful Father, for all men everywhere. As it is thy will to be acknowledged the Saviour of the whole world, through the redemption wrought by thy Son Jesus Christ, grant that those who are still estranged from the knowledge of Him, being in the darkness and captivity of error and ignorance, may be brought by the illumination of thy Holy Spirit and the preaching of the Gospel to the straight way of salvation, which is to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. (Calvin [1542/5] 1980: 200).

It is noticeable here that much of the sermonising and exposition in question takes place through 'supplementary' subordinate clauses - and especially those of a relative type - eg. 'As it is thy will to be acknowledged the Saviour...'; 'those *who* are still estranged from the knowledge of him...being in darkness...'; '*which* is to know thee...and Jesus Christ, *whom* thou hast sent' etc.. Adverbial groups are also used to carry significant doctrinal information: '*through* the redemption wrought *by* thy Son'; '*by* the illumination of the Holy Spirit'; '*to* the straight way of salvation'. In addition, substantial 'pedagogic' modification and qualification of nouns loads further weight onto the Quantity Maxim: '*most gracious and merciful* Father'; 'the Saviour *of the whole world*'; '*thy Son* Jesus Christ'; 'the *only true* God' etc.. As well as confirming Ramsey's (1957: 66-89) point about the distinctively 'odd qualifiers' of religious discourse, these phenomena are mirrored in the seminal *Middleburg Liturgy* of the English Puritans (1586), whose sometime post-sermon prayer is, if anything, even more replete with didactic deviation:

- (3) Almighty God and Heavenly Father, since thou hast promised to grant our requests, which we shall make unto thee in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ thy wellbeloved Son, and that we are also taught by him and his Apostles, to assemble our selves in his Name promising that he will be among us, and make intercession for us unto thee, for the obtaining of all such things, as we shall agree upon here on Earth: we therefore (having first thy commandment to pray for such as thou hast appointed rulers and governors over us, and also for all things needfull, both for thy people, and for all sortes of men, forasmuch as our faith is grounded on thine Holy Word and promises, and that we are here gathered together before thy face, and in the Name of thy Son our Lord Jesus), we, I say, make our earnest supplication unto thee, our most merciful God and bountiful Father...(Middleburg [1586] 1980: 325-6).

With particular relation to Baxter's *Savoy Liturgy* of 1661, but with more general reference to English Puritan rites, Erik Routley has observed a governing principle that 'nothing must be left to the imagination...'. With the Anglican contention that a brief and oft-repeated prayer can inspire personal devotions arising from it 'the Puritans would have nothing to do'. The result, he concludes, was an excess of 'literalism' which virtually obliterated 'style', 'rhythm', and 'graceful turns of phrase' and which preferred 'that crudity which comes from Scripture to that urbanity which smacks of 'the church''. Indeed, Baxter went so far as to repeat the practice of the earlier Middleburg and 'Waldegrave' liturgies by printing relevant Bible references in the margin of his order (Davies 1948: 126).

Although the more extreme versions of this didactic Reformation approach may be less evident today, our field corpus still throws up numerous examples of doctrinal assertion made in passages where more straightforwardly Expressive or Declarational discourse might be thought more appropriate. Now, as before, sub-clauses generally and relative clauses especially, along with adverbials, modifiers and qualifiers, are the most noticeable vehicles for such 'sermonisation':

- (4) MINISTER: Father as we come to you on this day we come to praise and to worship,  
 to glorify your name,  
 for you: are the one who has sent Jesus,  
 and will /save the earth/... .  
 Thankyou: that he has come once..as a baby.  
 The one who was able to step into history to declare your love,  
 to identify with our human lives  
 in their frailty and sin...,  
 to come amongst us  
 and to share all that you have in store for us.  
 To declare your kingdom...  
 and to bring...forgiveness,  
 and new life  
 through his death on the cross...

(AS 4: 35-58 - Prayer of praise & invocation (extemporary)).

Here, certainly, the *lex credendi* dominates the *lex orandi*: credal dogma is so explicitly 'brought along' to the prayer that its stated purpose of 'praise' and 'glorification' is relatively much less apparent. Theological exposition enters pervasively also, into the following prayer of thanksgiving from Blackford Bridge:

- (5) MINISTER: We give you thanks  
 for our life and salvation in Jesus,  
 who became one with us.  
 Who died,  
 and who rose again,  
 that we might have life in him.  
 Be made members of your church,  
 and heirs of you kingdom.

(AS 9: 152-9)

Intriguingly, none of the churches in our Advent Survey recite a creed proper, and in this they diverge from the liturgical practice of Calvin and Knox - if not from subsequent English Independent procedure (Davies 1948: 135). Nevertheless,



'credal' speech acts are clearly dispersed throughout their services and as such, bear an 'informational' load which might be questioned from a 'Quantity Maxim' perspective. Moreover, this load seems somewhat heavier in extemporary discourse than in that drawn from contemporary service book sources - sources which have mainly followed the more elliptical model of 'high' church prayer (eg. URC 1989). Hence, rather than a terse 'General Confession' from which worshippers can infer their own particular sins (as in URC 1989: 5), the Minister at Warsash offers this very pointedly sermonised act of penitence:

- (6) MINISTER: Father it would be easy to enter into judgement,  
 and condemn,  
shopkeepers and shoppers alike,  
 for ignoring,  
 the Lord's Day.  
 It would be easy to condemn,  
 the houses of parliament,  
 for...not putting their foot down,  
 and for th- and to condemn the local authorities for not enforcing the law.  
 But Father we have to recognise that it is your church that is under judgement.  
 It is our fault,  
 that things have come to this pass.  
 (AS 5: 335-46)

In this case, it would seem that the chief load of implicature is directed towards God: the Minister is *defining* the people's sin as much as *confessing* it on their behalf.

If Reformed worship seems in ways like those just illustrated characteristically to challenge the Quantity Maxim with an excess of detail, there are odd traces in

our corpus of an apparently opposite violation. In such instances, ritual ellipsis is disambiguated not by adjacent linguistic explication, but rather, by its relation to some extralinguistic 'context of action'. The moodless Assertive Directives we analysed at 5.6.2.1 would fall into this category: the function of 'The body of Christ, broken for you' as a command to eat is not 'presupposed' or 'entailed' in the linguistic object: it is inferable only from the rite as habitually 'practised' and 'learnt'. The same applies to the stark Scripture texts which are quoted, without identification and in radical displacement from their Biblical settings, at the start of several services in our corpus:

- (7) MINISTER: 'How lovely on the mountain are the FEET of the herald,  
who comes to proclaim,  
prosperity  
and bring the good news  
of deliverance'.  
Our first hymn is number FIVE HUNDRED and twelve.  
SONGS of PRAISE  
the angels..sang.

(AS 1: 1-5)

- (8) MINISTER: 'Who has raised up from the east  
one greeted by victory wherever he goes?'  
We sing this first Sunday of Advent  
the traditional opening of the Advent season,  
number one hundred and twenty six.

(AS 6: 1-9)

(see also AS 3: 1-3; 9: 1-2)

Here, worshippers must not only recognise the discourse as Scriptural citation; they must also realise that though this is hardly a normal opening strategy for

casual conversation, it is acceptable for sacral speech events and will have some bearing on what follows later - even if it is not immediately or overtly 'explained'. Having said this, we can perhaps see a confirmation that the Reformed church as a whole is relatively more wary of ellipsis than other more rigidly 'textualised' traditions, in the fact that four of our 10 churches begin with a less liturgically distinctive 'Good morning' (AS 2: 1-2; 7: 1-2; 8: 1-2; 10: 1-2 cf. CELC 1980a: 82; Sunday Missal 1984: 109)

As we move on to consider Grice's second maxim of Quality, it might seem axiomatic that a Christian 'believer' would not say what s/he 'believed to be false', and especially not in worship. After all, the Ninth Commandment is only one of many Biblical injunctions against telling lies (Exod. 20:16; Lev. 19:11; Rom 1:25; Col. 3:9). Furthermore, though the 'evidence' for Christian truth-claims may be disputed by others at an empirical level, one could reasonably assume that these truth claims are sufficiently 'operative' in the church community, where they constitute no less than a 'rule of faith'. The problem with this link, however, is precisely the problem we identified in 5.3 as arising from application of Searle's 'Sincerity Condition' to the language of liturgy, and in 5.6.3 as attending the definition of 'truth' and 'falsity' in sacral speech action. The plain fact is that not all who participate in liturgical discourse are equally, or even barely, committed to its truth-claims, even while they may yet collude with its *social* and *behavioural* functions. Like Searle, Grice bases his model on an intentionalism which is

essentially individual and mentalistic, but as Tilley points out (1991: 28 n2), 'our actions can mean and communicate what we intend, or more or less than we intend, depending on the context in which we perform them'. In this sense, Tilley's criticism of Searle applies equally to Grice's Quality Maxim in that it 'has trouble accounting for the ways in which contexts constitute (in part) the nature of our acts. To learn how to perform meaningful acts, to learn what meaning others' acts have, one learns not how to understand their mental intentions, but *how to do things*' (my emphasis).

The echo of Austin here is pertinent, for he at least acknowledged a 'particular difficulty' in the question whether 'when two parties are involved "consensus ad quem" is necessary' (1962: 36). Similarly, he perceived that 'thoughts are a most interesting, ie. a confusing, case' (1962: 41). In particular, he pointed out that in saying 'I congratulate you' we may believe the 'truth' and 'validity' of the convention of congratulating some person in some context, without necessarily believing that they have done anything worthy of praise. Even more appositely, he suggested that certain circumstances might require 'apologies' even though those giving them may not believe they have erred (1962: 45-6): a newspaper printing a retraction to avoid being sued would be a salient contemporary example of this. The parallels with liturgy are clear: the uncommitted or semi-committed might still pray prayers of adoration or confession out of deference to the wider sacral context. In such instances, *ritual* and *institutional* prerogatives supersede personal

intentionalities and the Maxim of Quality begs a revision which accounts for more *corporate* wills and purposes.

Grice's third Maxim - the Maxim of Relevance - is, by his own admission, 'exceedingly difficult' (1975: 46). In basic terms, he states it thus:

I expect a partner's contribution to be appropriate to the immediate needs at each stage of the transaction; if I am mixing ingredients for a cake, I do not expect to be handed a good book, or even an oven cloth (though this might be an appropriate contribution at a later stage). (1975: 47).

With specific reference to discourse, however, he confesses 'a number of problems', including 'questions about what different kinds and focusses of relevance there may be, how these shift in the course of a talk exchange, how to allow for the fact that subjects of conversation are legitimately changed, and so on' (46). As we shall see in 6.3 below, these questions have now been addressed in great detail by Sperber and Wilson (1986; 1987), but simply as a maxim of liturgical communication, there can be little dispute as to the importance of 'Be Relevant'. We made it clear in 5.3 that liturgy is archetypally 'rule governed': even where fixed orders are rejected for the sake of 'lexical freedom', vocabulary is still likely to be 'marked' and will often still adhere to formulaic patterns (Rosenberg 1970a, 1970b; Coleman 1980; Jamieson 1975). Insofar as Christian liturgy is based on an authoritative Scripture, its language and relevant themes are predetermined (Daniélou 1954; Gray 1988); and insofar as it is shaped by church,

tradition or both, its expression is pragmatically institutionalised. As a consequence of all this, the parameters of Relevance in liturgy are more sharply defined than in, say, a 'casual chat' between friends. References to mundane matters like shopping or gardening may be permissible at certain junctures (eg. during a children's address or as 'parabolic' sermon illustrations), but would not normally be considered appropriate.

Of course, within this broad characterisation there are diverse *styles* of worship, each of which might be distinguished by the *range* of topics which are regarded as 'relevant'. Hence, a charismatic or Pentecostal service is more likely to permit testimonies from worshippers sharing deeply personal concerns than a traditional BCP mattins in the Church of England. Then again, the Relevance of such testimonies is not entirely without qualification: they would have no place, for example, in the enunciation of a prophecy (Davies 1984: 114-16).

We shall deal more thoroughly with issues of liturgical regulation, institutionalisation and style in Chapter 8 but even at this point in our discussion it is clear that what Grice says about relevance overlaps to some degree with his final Maxim - the Maxim of Manner. Here, 'Being perspicuous' clearly entails 'Being relevant': an 'obscure' or 'ambiguous' speaker will more often than not be perceived as 'failing to stick to the point', while 'unnecessary prolixity' (which, as we saw with examples (2) and (3) above, is a Quantity violation) might very well involve excess digression. Aside from this, 'manner' can be seen as a vital component in the constitution of worship: insofar as church rites represent 'governed behaviour',

injunctions to 'decency' and 'order' are central (cf. 1 Cor. 14:40). Indeed, such prerogatives are sometimes so pervasive that participants may be required to countenance what Grice (49) terms a *clash* in order to maintain them. Good evidence of this is offered by Warner (1990: 159), who follows Holdcroft (1979: 141) in observing that circumlocution is sometimes encoded as a *means* to orderliness, rather than a denial of it. This is to say, where Holdcroft cites fulsome and deferential address to an emperor as just such an instance of the Quantity Maxim and 'Brevity' sub-Maxims being sacrificed in the cause of institutional felicity, Warner notes a similar tactic at work in various forms of Anglican petition (1990: 159). A parallel from the English Reformed tradition would be this Prayer of approach from the Congregational Union's 1959 *Book of Services*:

- (9) Almighty and everlasting God, Lord of heaven and earth, of whom, and through whom, and to whom are all things: we glorify thy majesty and grace. All thy works praise thee in all places of thy dominion; and thy truth and love are revealed in Jesus Christ. Therefore, with the redeemed of all ages, we laud and magnify thy holy name, O God, most blessed for ever. (Congregational Union 1959: 9).

A similarly fulsome deference is apparent at various points in our corpus. Normally, it would be unnecessary to lavish praise and obeisance upon someone as extensively, repeatedly or ascriptively as in the examples which follow. Nevertheless, when the addressee is God and the institutional context a prayer of adoration, the Manner Maxim again overrides the Quantity Maxim:

- (10) MINISTER: Glory be to you,  
Lord God King of the universe.

Glory be to you Lord God,  
dwelling in light and majesty,  
glory be to you,  
 Lord God beyond our highest thoughts.  
 Glory be to you Lord God,  
 giver of light and life.  
Glory be to you,  
 from the company of heaven who see you face to face.  
Glory from your people on earth,  
 who have seen,  
 your love and your salvation.  
 Glory be to you Lord God,  
 through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
 Amen.

(AS 8. 61-76 - From Dixon 1983: 12).

- (11) MINISTER: So Lord be with us in our worship,  
 for we offer you..everything that we have today,  
 we give it to you,  
 for you alone are worthy  
 of all that we can give... .  
 We offer our praise and worship in Jesus' name (...)

(AS 4. 65-9 - Extemporary)

Less extensively, but no less distinctively, the 'Orderliness' sub-maxim can be seen to account for what might best be described as 'idiolectal' features within particular strands of churchmanship. For example, we have long observed a marked use of the adverbial limiter 'just' in English Charismatic worship - a word which seems semantically rather redundant, but which nevertheless appears to 'encode' a whole style of Christian belief and practice. At first sight, its use seems to diverge from the Maxim of Quantity and the Manner sub-maxim 'Be Brief'; all the same, it is clear from our transcript of the Charismatic service at Warsash that it actually instantiates a contextually felicitous 'order' - not only as a mere 'badge' of Charismatic identity, but also as a genuinely meaningful way of expressing that



passionate 'humble yearning' for God which is in fact a keystone of Charismatic spirituality (Lister 1983):

- (12) W.LEADER 2: Lord we just pray for our children  
(AS 5. 202)
- (13) W.LEADER 2: And we just want to bathe in that,  
aura of your holiness this morning  
(AS 5. 286-7)
- (14) W.LEADER 2: We [...]  
Just pray that you will,  
move among us  
(AS 5. 291-2)

As it is, both invocatory circumlocutions and the 'Charismatic "just"' could be said to maintain a special form of liturgical 'politeness' - one in which proper address to God requires a corporate version of that very same 'awed gratitude' which Smith & McClendon identify as a core 'affective condition' on the performance of worship. Although this 'corporatization' might apply more readily to the former than the latter, it is clearly necessary for liturgy as a whole. Fortunately for our purposes, David Holdcroft has recognised that Grice's model must be revised to accommodate such institutional contexts. With specific regard to the CP, this means that it might be brought more explicitly to bear on *all* discourse types, rather than merely on conversational interactions. Holdcroft's revision reads as follows:

Make your contribution to the discourse such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the purposes you have in entering into, or which you have accepted as the purposes of, or which are the generally accepted purposes of, the discourse in which you are a participant. (1979: 139) .

Like Levinson (1979: 374), Holdcroft realises that not all talk exchanges are uniformly co-operative: police interrogations, diplomatic encounters and sales negotiations for instance, will often run contrary to Grice's assumptions - not least because they display a variation of 'discourse rights' between their respective participants (Holdcroft 1979: 133). Hence the recognition of 'individual' as well as 'mutual' purposes in this revision. What is more, even where rights and aims are *apparently* shared, Holdcroft importantly perceives that the degree of existential commitment to them may vary: while it may indeed be unequivocal, there are occasions where the purposes of discourse will be more 'generally willed' than individually endorsed - that is, more ritualized and conventionalized than personally approved (1979: 136). Holdcroft recognises that this latter scenario is more typical of multi-party discourse than of two-person dialogue, and thus importantly distinguishes between conscious *co-operation* and a less wilful *consent* on the part of the audience - 'even on occasions when it says nothing' (1979: 130 cf. Tilley 1991: 62). Of complementary interest here is Sarangi & Slembrouck's (1992) focus on a crucial ambiguity in Grice's notion of co-operation, showing how it has been interpreted both as an ethical prescription (Allwood 1976), and as a purely empirical, descriptive norm (Leech & Thomas 1990: 181). In the same vein, they go on to show that it could be regarded as a principle which is either universal (that

is, 'socially neutral'), or else affected by particular contexts and cultural variables like class, power, education etc.. In placing greater stress on the latter, 'discoursally situated' approach, Sarangi & Slembrouck echo Holdcroft's perception that degrees of individual 'benevolence' may vary between participants, even within the same talk exchange. Furthermore, both their and Holdcroft's emphasis on institutional discourses as prime examples of such variation raises major issues for our study of Christian rite:

...a theory of communication cannot take an institutionally defined truth, ie. a socially relative one, as an absolute one for explaining and describing what goes on in interactions...the use of the CP as a device for explaining how language users arrive at meaning forces us into a position where one has to postulate a mutually accepted and defined content for the Gricean maxims, and the risk is indeed that the institutional definitions are given an absolute, scientific status. (1992: 132 cf. Holdcroft 1979: 136).

Again here, we find ourselves returning to the essential question of *faith* as a cognitive dynamic in the 'activation' and 'validation' of ritual meaning. Is liturgy to be defined as 'social discourse', wherein considerations about the 'speaking (or believing) subject' are misguided (Derrida 1991 [1972]: 67; Mey 1989), or is it rather to be viewed as a divinely-initiated dialogue to which an individual is 'inducted' on the basis of his or her 'affective disposition' (Ladrière 1973: 56)? This question in turn touches once more on the much-debated place of *intentionality* in pragmatic analysis (cf. Derrida 1977, Searle 1977, 1983; Petrey 1990: 67-69), and as such reiterates the tension between 'personal' and 'corporate' identities in liturgical pragmatic analysis.

Although Grice's Maxims can clearly be applied to the liturgical situation, it should be stressed that the core phenomenon of Implicature is most essentially and substantially associated by him not with a simple observance of these maxims, but rather with the '*flouting*' of them for some ulterior rhetorical purpose (1975: 45, 49). As it typically occurs in conversation, this flouting is distinguished by an apparently constructive desire to *uphold* the overall CP: it is in this sense quite different from either 'violating' a maxim 'in order to mislead', or from deliberately 'opting out' of a discourse. Neither is it the same as that endorsing of necessary 'clashes' between maxims to which we referred above (1975:49). Indeed, as Grice describes it, flouting generates implicatures 'by means of something of the nature of a figure of speech' (52). On this premiss, he associates it with Quantity-related devices like ellipsis and tautology (52); with 'Qualitative' tropes such as irony, metaphor, meiosis and hyperbole (53); with Relevance-oriented strategies like 'changing the subject' when someone commits a *faux pas*, and with such positive exploitations of the Manner maxim as a poet's seeking 'multiple readings' by using ambiguous phrases, the invocation of euphemism for humorous effect, and deliberate obfuscation by two speakers wishing to conceal information from a third party (54-5).

Grice's exposition of flouting is associated organically with what he calls *conversational implicature* (1975: 49) - that is, with implicature as it operates in 'spontaneous', non-ritualized discourses. Specifically, this means that Grice's addressee decodes flouted maxims 'on the spot', by applying the general

constituents of the CP to particular utterances *as and when they occur*. Cognitively, this suggests a process of logical deduction in which, according to Grice,

...a man who, by (in, when) saying (or making as if to say) that *p* has implicated that *q*, may be said to have conversationally implicated that *q* PROVIDED THAT 1) he is to be presumed to be observing the conversational maxims, or at least the co-operative principle; 2) the supposition that he is aware that, or thinks that, *q* is required in order to make his saying or making as if to say *p* (or doing so in THOSE terms) consistent with this presumption; and 3) the speaker thinks (and would expect the hearer to think that the speaker thinks) that it is within the competence of the hearer to work out, or grasp intuitively, that the supposition mentioned in 2) IS required. (1975: 50)

This association of implicature with the contingent 'working out' and 'intuitive grasping' of presumed suppositions may well be valid for conversation, in which participants are dealing with relatively new or 'unpredictable' utterances from one exchange to the next. It is surely less applicable, however, to those 'fixed' and 'fairly definite' discourses which Grice claims might also be dealt with by his theory. As we have begun to see, the precise fixity of liturgical discourses can vary considerably, but insofar as they represent 'routine' or 'institutional' forms of communication, the points at which such discourses 'exploit' Grice's maxims are likely to be recognised less by spontaneous deduction than by *convention* - that is, by prior knowledge of the 'language-game'. In uttering the *Agnus Dei*, individual communicants are not expected at every eucharist to decompose Christ's logico-metaphoric relation with the Jewish Paschal lamb; rather, in Holdcroft's terms, they are invited to 'give their consent' to this expression by virtue of its historic place in a rite which stands at the very heart of Christian faith and practice.

Now Grice does acknowledge that certain implicatures may function formulaically in the way just described. Indeed, he proposes that conversational implicatures must be set alongside so-called *conventional implicatures* in any account of the relationship between 'saying' and 'meaning' (44-5). Conventional implicatures develop as ritual associations between words and are in this sense exemplified by such sentences as

- (16)                      He is an Englishman; he is, therefore, brave.

The dynamics at work here are explained by Grice in these terms:

I have certainly committed myself, by virtue of the meaning of my words, to its being the case that his being brave is a consequence of (follows from) his being an Englishman. But while I have said that he is an Englishman, and said that he is brave, I do not want to say that it follows from his being an Englishman that he is brave, though I have certainly indicated, and so implicated, that this is so. I do not want to say that my utterance of the sentence would be, **STRICTLY SPEAKING**, false should the consequence in question fail to hold. So **SOME** implicatures are conventional...(1975: 44-5).

Later, Grice underlines this distinction by insisting that even though they may be intuitively grasped, conversational implicatures must still be expressible as an 'argument' in the formal, logical sense (50); conventional implicatures, by contrast, have no such necessarily logical foundation and are thus non-truth-conditional. The 'therefore' in (32) is from this point of view misleading, and certainly cannot be equated with the symbols  $\rightarrow$  (denoting material implication) or  $\rightarrow$  (denoting strict

implication). This is to say, from a logical, truth-conditional perspective, it follows

*neither*

- (15)                   that if a man (M) is English (E), then he is brave (b) ( $ME \rightarrow b$ )

*nor*

- (16)                   that in all possible worlds, to be an English man is, *ipso facto*, to be brave ( $ME \rightarrow b$ )

Rather, the inference made here is purely habitual: as in the discrimination of 'and' from 'but' (Levinson 1983:127), there is nothing *logically* significant about 'therefore': its pragmatic function is routinized rather than conversationally implicated.

An interesting liturgical parallel to all this is the introduction to the *Sanctus*, which traditionally begins with the same causal connective 'Therefore':

- (17) MINISTER:       Therefore with all your people in heaven  
                            and on earth we sing the triumphant  
                            hymn of your glory:  
                            Holy, Holy, Holy Lord...

(URC 1989: 12, 14, 15)

- (18) MINISTER:       Therefore with angels and archangels,  
                            and with all the company of heaven,  
                            we laud and magnify your glorious..name.  
                            Evermore praising you,  
                            and singing,  
                            Holy, holy, holy Lord (...)

(AS 6.482-7 - From *A Book of Experimental Worship*)

Significantly, this section is preceded by a 'Seasonal Preface' which varies in content according to the time of the liturgical year (URC 1989: 17-18). Commonly, Proper Prefaces praise God for what He is and what He has done in relation to Lent, Passiontide, Ascension and so on. The point is that the link between reciting such prayers of praise and voicing the *Sanctus* cannot be 'intuitively grasped': there is nothing in the semantics of these Proper Prefaces which implies an inevitable joining with the heavenly host to declare God's holiness. The implicature is conventional, not conversational; it relates to the institutional structure of the rite rather than to its logical structure; it must be 'learnt' and cannot simply be 'inferred':

- (19) We praise you that [Jesus] took our nature and was born as the child of Mary, that he might share our life, reveal your love, reconcile us to yourself, and give us power to become your children.  
*Therefore* with all your people in heaven and on earth we sing the triumphant hymn of your glory...

(URC 1989: 15/17 (Christmas))

- (20) You *did* not send [Jesus] to condemn the world,  
but in order that the world might be enlightened and saved through him,  
so that everyone who believes  
is not condemned.  
Therefore with angels and archangels,  
and with all the company of heaven  
we laud and magnify your glorious..name.  
Evermore praising you,  
and singing, (...)

(AS 6.458-86 - From *A Handbook of Experimental Liturgy*)



Although these distinctions between conversational and conventional implicature seem persuasive, it has latterly been argued (eg. by Morgan 1978 and Leech & Thomas 1990) that they are not always sustainable. Most especially, problems of definition arise when utterances whose force could originally be calculated only by the means and methods of conversational implicature become, through repeated usage, more 'conventional' in nature. When this happens, analysis in terms of 'logical deduction', 'formal argument' or 'inferential processing' may still be possible, but will substantially miss the point (Morgan 1978: 263). So, a construction like 'Can you *x*' is unlikely now to be 'worked out' as a yes/no question functioning pragmatically as a polite request to take some action: rather, it has become idiomatic and as such prompts a typically 'automatic' response. Leech & Thomas (1990: 184) see the same process affecting Sir Robert Armstrong's *Spycatcher* trial expression 'to be economical with the truth': when first uttered in a Sydney courtroom, it represented a conversational implicature deriving from a flouting of the maxims of Quantity and Manner; now it has become a 'frozen metaphor' whose comprehension is far less reliant on 'conscious' application of the CP and its linked maxims. For our part, the 'Charismatic 'just"' would fall into the same bracket: although it has a residual implication inferable from its logico-grammatical status as an adverbial limiter (Quirk & Greenbaum 1973: 213), it's 'conventional' operation as an *ecclesiological* signifier in the worship of Warsash and kindred fellowships is at least as much a component of its 'meaning'.

Given its markedness as a language-game, the implicatures of Christian

worship would seem to be mostly 'conventional' in character. As we shall demonstrate more fully in Chapter 8, rituality and repetition in liturgy are universal phenomena and are certainly not confined to traditions based on set, written rites: even where prayer books are eschewed, reliance on established Biblical discourse, and a common need to consolidate religious identities in linguistic terms, has led to a preponderance of 'institutional expressions' demanding little in the way of cognitive disambiguation - at least from the initiated (Rosenberg 1970a; Güllich 1980). This phenomenon underlines the importance of examining more closely just *how* conversational and conventional implicatures might be distinguished, the better to ascertain the point at which the former could be said to transmute into the latter in liturgical speech.

Now Grice himself maintains as a first criterion of differentiation that conversational implicatures are *cancellable* whereas conventional implicatures are *non-cancellable*. For 'conversational' types this means that a speaker might 'add on' a retraction which is both logically possible and some way short of flat contradiction. For instance, whereas it is *usually* the case that 'not all *x*' implicates 'at least some *x*', a church Minister could still conceivably say:

- (21)                      Not all of today's worship will follow a set pattern - in fact, none of it will.

By contrast, it is both unacceptable and plainly heretical for the same Minister to cite Matthew 7:21 in preaching that

- (22)           \*       Not all who call Christ 'Lord, Lord' will enter the Kingdom of Heaven -  
in fact, nobody will

Because the first statement functions as a spontaneous 'spoken rubric', it is relatively unbound by convention and so quite susceptible to cancellation; however, since the latter draws on a sacred Scripture which operates conventionally as God's Word within the church, the verse quoted comes with certain established, 'universal' implicatures attached - implicatures which cannot be reversed in the way just mooted. The Biblical co-text makes it clear that Jesus adhered at this point to the 'normal' implication of 'not all *x*', and since he is the authoritative 'Word made flesh', it is his initial, intended implication which is conventionalized as the only possible implication for an orthodox church today.

Interestingly however, not all such 'scalar' implicatures (Levinson 1983: 127ff) are conventionalized in this way within Biblical discourse. Any congregation which seeks to dramatise the resurrection story as part of its Easter Day liturgy is faced with a dilemma *vis à vis* the representation of guardians at Jesus' tomb. Does it have one such figure (as in Matthew and Mark's account), or two (as in Luke and John's versions) ? Intriguingly, John Wenham (1984: 87) suggests a resolution of this dilemma by invoking the conditions of conversational rather than conventional implicature, arguing that Matthew and Mark's report of a single figure does not rule out (ie . may be 'cancelled' to confirm) that there were in fact two. Indeed, liturgies appear often to have made use of the 'cancellability principle' when inferring from Scripture a degree of harmony on which many modern Biblical

critics would cast doubt - for example by conflating three or four possible 'Marys' into a single Saint Mary Magdalene (Cross & Livingstone 1983: 884); or by highlighting Christ's cleansing of the temple as a Lenten episode drawn from his Passion when John places it (or another similar incident) at the beginning of his ministry (CELC 1980a: 508-510). In each case, a unitary approach to the Biblical texts can be seen to have derived from an inherently cancellable conversational implicature to the effect that 'although there may be more than one case, there is certainly one case'. Ironically, of course, such apparent 'liturgical logic' has with time been transmuted into powerful conventional implicatures, such that a single Mary and a purely Paschal cleansing are now widely assumed among churchgoers and the population at large to be what the Bible itself teaches.

These examples confirm that though a 'condition' like cancellability may help us to make a formal distinction between conversational and conventional implicature, it does not always enable us to discriminate between the two in specific instances.

Much the same can be said of Grice's second distinguishing condition for conversational as compared with conventional implicatures - that of *non-detachability*. At heart, this means that conversational implicatures are not tied to specific linguistic items in the way that conventional implicatures are, but rest instead on logical relations which may be expressed through a variety of lexical and grammatical means. Indeed, it is from this premiss that Grice depicts the

aforementioned and/but distinction as purely conventional. According to his own definition of non-detachability,

Insofar as the calculation that a particular conversational implicature is present requires, besides contextual and background information, only a knowledge of what has been said (or of the conventional commitment of the utterance), and insofar as the manner of expression plays no role in the calculation, it will not be possible to find another way of saying the same thing, which simply lacks the implicature in question, except where some special feature of the substituted version is itself relevant to the determination of an implicature (in virtue of one of the maxims of Manner) (1975: 58).

In an important supplementary article on the themes of logic and conversation (1978: 115 ), Grice exemplifies this condition of non-detachability by stating that while the word 'try' conversationally implicates either failure, the chance of failure, or some perception of the chance of failure, this implicature would also be carried by the verbs 'attempt to', 'endeavour to', 'set oneself to' and so on. By contrast, we should recall that the 'therefore' in sentence (32) constitutes a particular form associated by convention with a particular presupposition<sup>3</sup>. In this sense, it is comparable with items like 'even' (Karttunen & Peters 1979), 'moreover', 'anyway', 'still' and 'oh' (Levinson 1983: 128). Admittedly, constructions like 'thus' or 'as such' might have performed much the same role as 'therefore' in Grice's sample statement, but the point is that they would then have represented discrete *conventional* implicatures in their own right, rather than all belonging to one truth-functional *conversational* implicature (cf. Green 1989: 94).

---

3. In attempting to distinguish the formulaic, prefabricated force of such forms from presuppositions of the classical, 'spontaneously processed' type, Gazdar (1979) applies to them the term *pre-suppositions*. Green (1989: 94) simply notes that this class of expressions 'are now customarily referred to as *conventional implicatures* rather than *presuppositions*' - a trend which stands in marked contrast to Kempson's (1975) contention that all *conventional implicatures* are reducible to entailments, *conversational implicatures* or *standard presuppositions*.

Applying the 'nondetachability' criterion to liturgical implicatures raises considerable problems - problems which beg key questions about Grice's methodology. Perhaps most crucially, difficulties arise in the thorny area of service book revision. Does the much-disputed change from 'Thee' to 'You' for addressing God constitute *minimal 'redcoration'* of the same detachable implicature, or is the shift more fundamental, obliterating a vital honorific stratagem (preserved in the French *tu/vous*) - one which Levinson (1983: 128) sees as generating a distinct and definite conventional implicature in its own right? Does the drive towards inclusive language in many liturgies mean merely a superficial updating of 'equivalent' forms, or is a more deep-rooted change of generalised conversational implicatures involved? It is worth underlining Grice's caveat that the non-detachability condition cannot be applied in cases where implicatures depend on observation of the Maxims of Manner rather than of Quantity, Quality or Relation (cf., Horn 1988: 123). In effect, this is a recognition that though conversational implicatures are determined by 'meaning' rather than 'saying' - that is, by logical rather than lexical constructions, there may be occasions which offer 'no alternative way of saying what is said, or no way other than one which will introduce peculiarities of Manner' (1978: 115). Here again, one can envisage a blurring of the distinction between conversational and conventional implicatures. For liturgy in particular, one might well ask on this basis: Are 'modern' versions of established prayers recast purely to 'avoid obscurity' or 'ambiguity' in the original, and if so, are we to accept with Grice that since such prerequisites of Manner cannot compromise non-detchability,

they retain the same conversational implicatures as their antecedents? Or are the differences actually more profound than this, involving not only new *conventional* forms but new *conversational* implicatures as well? Thiselton ([1975] 1986: 3) invokes a salient example of these complexities with reference to Anglican worship. The Prayer Book term 'prevent' in the petition 'Prevent us, O Lord, in all our doings' might very well be rendered today as 'Go before' in order to avoid an ambiguity stemming from diachronic change in the original term's meaning, but the substitute version could nevertheless be said to dilute an implicature of divine restraint which was present even in Cranmer's day, when the word had an admittedly more spatial denotation.

Of course, the recognition of such conscious and subtly exploited ambiguities is a primary facet of 'communicative competence' in liturgy. As such, it relates to Grice's remaining conditions for conversational implicatures - namely that they should be *calculable*, that is, derivable from the CP and its kindred maxims; that their 'truth' in terms of what is 'meant' must be distinguished formally from the truth of what is 'said' as they are conveyed; and that they are *indeterminate* - that is, potentially open to more than one interpretation. Calculability is the issue which was at stake in our earlier discussion of whether implicatures are 'worked out' conversationally or 'received' conventionally. The distinction between 'saying' and 'meaning' has also been made above, and it is clear from what has been said already that Indeterminacy (or unpredictability) of interpretation is crucial to Grice's discrimination of conversational from conventional implicatures.

For all their usefulness as general principles, Grice's 'five conditions' cannot be treated as laws - especially not for liturgical discourse, where, as we have seen, the conversational/conventional dichotomy is far from sharp. Indeed, Grice himself admitted at the end of his 1975 article that 'it may not be impossible for what starts life, so to speak, as a conversational implicature to become conventionalized' (1975: 58), and three years later this insight had grown more certain:

Indeed I very much doubt whether the features mentioned [of cancellability etc.] can be made to provide any...knock-down test, though I am sure that at least some of them are useful as providing a more or less strong *prima facie* case in favour of the presence of conversational implicature. But I would say that any such case would at least have to be supported by a demonstration of the way in which what is putatively implicated could have come to be implicated (by a derivation of it from conversational principles and other data); and even this may not be sufficient to provide a decisive distinction between conversational implicature and a case in which what was originally a conversational implicature has become conventionalized. (1978: 115).

If the 'indecision' to which Grice refers seems problematic, the problem is largely of his own making, given that it stems from a root conversational/conventional dichotomy whose dissolution would seem to be a norm rather than an exception in institutionalised discourses like those of church worship. Grice's frankness about the flaws in his framework is notable, but given the somewhat abstract distinction between intention and convention on which that framework is predicated, one might wonder whether a less 'polarised' model of linguistic communication would not serve liturgical discourse study better. It is to just such a model that we shall now turn.



### 6.3. Liturgy in the light of Relevance Theory

We have seen that Grice believed issues raised by his Maxim of Relevance to be 'exceedingly difficult' (1975: 46). Not only did he envisage various 'kinds and focuses of Relevance'; he was also concerned with how these might change throughout a discourse. Although he intended to explore such matters further 'in a later work', it has in fact fallen to Sperber & Wilson (1986, 1987) to provide a definitive study of them. It is our conviction that this study offers useful analytical fuel to the liturgical pragmatician - fuel which can drive his task rather more easily than that provided by Grice. Certainly, Sperber & Wilson treat Relevance as much more than a sub-category of Implicature. For them, in fact, it constitutes nothing less than a new paradigm for pragmatics as a whole (1986: 10-15; 56-60; 243-47). Further still, they claim that their 'Relevance Theory' actually serves as a general theory of communication rather than being simply a methodology for the analysis of particular utterances in context (1986: 1-64).

Sperber and Wilson begin by observing that all theories of communication from Aristotle onwards have been based on a 'code model', where a 'code' is 'a system which pairs internal messages with external signals, thus enabling two information-processing devices (organisms or machines) to communicate' (1987: 697). Without doubt, this code model reflects the semiotic/semiological theories of Peirce and Saussure who, as we saw in 1.2, envisaged communication very much in terms of 'signals' being paired with 'messages' (cf. Sperber & Wilson 1986: 55).

Indeed, with particular reference to the primary case of language, Saussure's insistence that this pairing is essentially 'arbitrary' ([1915] 1959: 67-8) - that there is no 'inner relationship' between signifiers and that which they signify - suggests precisely that utterances must be 'encoded' and 'decoded', that is, produced and received with reference to their relative 'position' within the system rather than to any 'fixed' or 'universal' denotation beyond it. It is on such established 'code models' of information theory that Lardner (1979) predicated his more broadly anthropological 'pragmatic' of the Mass.

While recognising the pervasiveness of the code model, Sperber and Wilson claim that it is 'descriptively inadequate' (1987: 697) and invoke the work of pragmaticians like Green & Morgan (1981) and Leech (1983) when stressing that 'there is a gap between the semantic representations of sentences and the thoughts actually communicated by utterances. This gap is filled not by mere coding, but by inference' (1987: 697). Inference differs from coding in that, far from being predicated on an arbitrary relation of 'premises' and 'conclusions', it 'takes a set of premises as input and yields as output a set of conclusions which follow logically from, or are at least warranted by, the premises' (1987: 698). According to Sperber & Wilson, pragmatics has often failed to make this distinction between 'coding' and 'inference' explicit: the semiotic provenance of the subject has led to its being presented 'programmatically', on analogy with syntax and semantics, as 'a code-like mental device underlying a distinct level of linguistic ability'; *in practice* however, Sperber and Wilson maintain that 'pragmaticians have described comprehension as

an inferential process' (1987: 698) - a development which they attribute largely to Grice's original distinction between 'saying' and 'meaning' (1957) and to the subsequent 'psychologizing' of pragmatics which has followed from his work on implicature (1975, 1978 cf. Sperber & Wilson 1987: 699). Having said this, while Sperber & Wilson take Grice's inferential model as their 'point of departure' (1986: 21ff; 1987: 698), they contend that its co-option by pragmaticians has faltered precisely through being tied to the 'code' paradigm, and thereby to a presumption of mutual knowledge which is 'psychologically implausible' (1987: 698):

Does it follow that pragmaticians who hold to the code model but describe comprehension in inferential terms are being inconsistent? Not necessarily. It is formally conceivable that a decoding process should contain an inferential process as a sub-part. However, for this to be possible, speaker and hearer must use not only the same language but also the same set of premises, because what makes the code model explanatory is that symmetrical operations are performed at the emitting and receiving ends. (1987: 698).

In reality, though, Sperber and Wilson maintain that while speakers and hearers may share *some* assumptions, there will be others which they do *not* hold in common. This very much squares with what we have been saying about the diverse intent, commitment and knowledge of those who attend worship in relation to the propositions of the *lex credendi* which is articulated *in* worship. For Sperber & Wilson, the key question concerns just how speakers and hearers are to distinguish the assumptions they share from those they do *not* share (1987: 698). In order to draw this distinction, Sperber and Wilson claim that interlocutors 'must make second-order assumptions about which first-order assumptions they share; but then

they had better make sure that they share these second-order assumptions, which calls for third-order assumptions, and so on indefinitely'. Despite their pervasiveness, Sperber & Wilson argue that these models of infinite regress and 'necessary' mutual knowledge lack substance. Indeed, they point out crucially that 'pragmaticians have offered no independent support for the claim that individuals engaging in verbal communication can and do distinguish mutual from nonmutual knowledge' (1987: 698).

From this basis, Sperber and Wilson move on to reject both the 'mutual knowledge hypothesis' and the code model of linguistic communication which implies it (1987: 698). Instead, they develop Grice's account of Implicature in a new direction, on the understanding that implicatures are communicated 'not by coding, but by providing evidence of the fact that the speaker intends to convey them' (1987: 699). In specific terms, this means that Sperber and Wilson decompose Grice's intentionalism into two distinct 'goals' of communication (1986: 54ff):

1. *An Informative Intention* - the intention to make manifest or more manifest to the audience a certain set of assumptions.
2. *A Communicative Intention* - the intention to make mutually manifest to audience and communicator the communicator's informative intention.

What is being established here is that effective communication depends not only on the conveyance of immediately-evidenced information, but also on a successful transmission of the *speaker's intention to convey information*, even

where direct evidence for such information may be lacking. For Sperber & Wilson, communication is thus founded crucially on *ostension* (the signal that the speaker has something to communicate) as well as upon *inference* (the logical process by which the addressee derives meaning). What is more, these two dynamics are fundamentally related. To some extent, the roots of this ostensive-inferential link can be traced to Bach & Harnish's earlier attempts at recasting speech act theory in Gricean terms ([1979] 1991: 238, cf. 1987: 712). Certainly, their work had confirmed that 'the intended effect of an act of communication is not just any effect produced by means of the recognition of the intention to produce a certain effect, it is *the recognition of that effect*'. While admitting that this seemed to be a reflexive paradox, Bach & Harnish had gone on to confirm that 'the effect, the hearer's recognizing the speaker's intention to produce that effect, is not produced by the hearer's recognizing that intention - that would be worse than a paradox, it would be a miracle'. Rather, 'it is produced by the hearer's recognizing that the speaker has an intention to produce a certain effect that he is to identify (and thereby have produced in him) partly by recognizing S's intention to produce an identifiable effect'.

As this exegesis makes clear, allowing for what Sperber & Wilson would come to call 'ostension' means that 'understanding' can be accounted for in terms radically different from 'reading the mind' of a 'Sender' or 'Speaker'. Appositely from our point of view, Sperber & Wilson themselves illustrate the working of ostension from a kinesic example:

Peter and Mary are sitting on a park bench. He points in a direction where she had not so far noticed anything in particular. This time, she takes a closer look and sees their acquaintance Julius in the distance, sitting on the grass. (1987: 700).

The point here is not just that Mary 'infers' the presence of Julius from Peter's gesture, but that she does so through recognising that by pointing in Julius' direction, Peter himself intends to demonstrate to her that if she pays attention she will gain some relevant information (1987: 700).

In *liturgy*, we find several examples of ostension working in a similar way. Just as pointing is a *convention* associated with 'picking something (or someone) out', so the 'segmentation' of liturgy is often signalled by kinesic actions which 'make ostensive' the intention of a Minister or other speaker to address the congregation to some particular end. Hence, when a Minister 'moves down' from a pulpit or lectern after the opening hymns and prayers to stand before the congregation, the congregation not only infer the commencement of a 'Children's Address' from her *actions*, but also recognise *from* those actions her ostensive *intention* to begin that address (see AS 3.65ff.; 4.139ff.; 6.97ff.). If this seems a rather abstract distinction, it comes more sharply into focus when language *itself* functions 'non-literally' or ambiguously in the context of worship. The following lines come from the Eucharistic Prayer in the URC *Service Book's* 'Second Order of Worship' (1989: 28):

(24) MINISTER:       As we share in the sufferings of Christ, so give us grace  
                              that we may know the power of his resurrection...

(URC 1989: 28)

Here, there is a logical implicature that communicants either do or will experience the same 'sufferings' that Jesus experienced. Nevertheless, in the context of the rite as prescribed, there is no direct evidence that this can or will be the case. Certainly, there is nothing to suggest that the Messiah's pain will be immediately apparent to every member of the congregation; besides, it is likely that not everyone would feel that their past, present or future hurts would merit such an elevated comparison. All the same, when the 'ostensive' positioning of the Minister behind a communion table spread with elements symbolising Christ's 'broken body' and 'shed blood' is taken into account, the purport of the message becomes much clearer: the sharing is principally the sharing of Holy Communion, not the sort of 'empathic' sharing which might be 'inferred' from the sentential meaning alone. Doxologically, there is a suggestive link here with Calvin's depiction of the eucharistic elements as 'seals' analogous to the seals which are impressed onto formal documents and letters ([1559] 1960: IV.14.5; IV.14.21-2; IV.16.4; IV.19.2 cf. Wallace 1953: 137-9). Though he deals only with the Austinian ramifications of Calvin's theology, Vincent (1979) anticipates what we have been saying about the paralinguistic 'ostension' of eucharistic discourse-meaning when he advances this analysis:

[The seal] is a remarkable sign in that it adds nothing to the 'signifying substance' of the body of the letter itself. It exists wholly as an action: it consists of an AUTHENTICATION of the intention of the addressor of the message, and of a confirmation of that space within the letter in which the receiver is identified as

addressee. As in the case of the sealed message, so in the case of the sacrament: the confirmation of sincere intent...coincides with what might be considered as the creation, in the receiver, of the attitude which befits that of an addressee.' (1979: 152-3).

If this sacramental example seems to dualise the verbal and non-verbal aspects of communication, Sperber & Wilson are quick to point out that though inference may characteristically be linked with *saying* and ostension with *showing*, the two are in fact 'continuous' with one another (1987: 700). Indeed, it will be noted that their own 'Paul and Mary' example, as well as our earlier 'Children's Address' scenario involve no language at all, but still entail both ostension and inference. Rather, Sperber & Wilson stress that 'inferential communication and ostension are one and the same process, but seen from two different points of view: that of the *communicator* who is involved in ostension and that of the audience who is involved in inference' (1987: 700). Indeed, we can on this basis demonstrate equally from our corpus that just as gestures are 'inferable' as well as 'ostensive', so language *itself* can be a means of ostension as well as a source of inference. Specifically, this becomes apparent in contextualisation - the process whereby those isolated 'sentences' which are the focus of logical inferencing have their function illuminated by recognition of what the speaker has 'shown' them to mean in his previous discourse. Here, for example, the potential difficulties in 'inferring' the lection Isaiah 41: 2-4 are alleviated by the 'ostensive' utterances with which the Minister introduces it:



- (24) MINISTER: [...] this morning  
 traditionally we concentrate o:n the message of the prophets,  
 a:nd the:  
coming of the Saviour as see:n through the prophets.  
 This..morning we have..as often on the first Sunday of Advent a reading  
 from the prophet Isaiah,  
 which Richard will read in a moment,  
 which will speak of the coming of Cyrus who was going to:..be..from  
 outside of Israel,  
 to try: to..help a:nd..save Israel from its troubles.  
 It's unusual that the Old Testament..has a look..a:t someone from outside  
 of Israel  
 (usually they're not /looked at/ at all usually they're just a problem..just a  
burden).  
This time Cyrus becomes ..one who comes from the east,  
 and who who is later picked up (in ma:ny way:s and..symbolisms)  
 as looking to the east in order to find various ways of salvation.  
 (And Richard will read that for us now).  
 (AS 6.63-76)

We shall have cause to return to this sort of 'contextualising metadiscourse', for it is another instance of that non-homiletic pedagogy which we have identified as a prolific and recurrent feature of Reformed worship.

Now to some extent, Sperber and Wilson's distinction of *informativeness* from *communicativeness* constitutes little more than a restatement of Grice's insistence that discourse must be analysed not just referentially but interpersonally - that is, with regard to the CP and its related Maxims as well as to straightforward 'propositional truths'. Despite this, they go on to criticise Grice and his followers for constructing a model which is 'almost entirely *ex post facto*' and which thus lacks the all-important feature of *predictivity* (1986: 37; cf. Chametsky 1992):

Given that an utterance in context is found to convey particular implicatures, what both the hearer and the pragmatician can do is to show how, in intuitive terms, an argument based on the context, the utterance and general expectations about the behaviour of the speakers justifies the particular interpretation chosen. What they

fail to show is that, on the same basis, an equally well-formed argument could not have been given for a quite different and in fact implausible basis.

Grice's idea that the very act of communication creates expectations which it then exploits provides a starting-point. Beyond that, the inferential model needs a more radical reworking in order to become truly explanatory. A psychologically realistic answer must be given to such basic questions as these: What shared information is exploited in communication? What forms of inference are used? What is relevance and how is it achieved? What role does the search for relevance play in communication? (1987: 699).

In attempting to answer these questions, Sperber and Wilson posit two fundamental and related concepts - namely *cognitive environment* and *manifestness*. We have already seen that the latter enters into their definition of communicative intention, but in explicit terms these two key notions are defined as follows:

*A cognitive environment* of an individual is a set of facts that are manifest to him.

A fact is *manifest* to an individual at a given time if, and only if, the individual is capable at that time of representing it mentally and accepting its representation as true or probably true. (1986: 39; 1987: 699).

On this basis, Sperber & Wilson maintain that 'to be manifest is to be perceptible or inferable' (1986: 39). Consequently, 'an individual's total cognitive environment consists not only of all the facts that he is aware of, *but of all the facts that he is capable of becoming aware of at that time and place*' (1987: 699; my emphasis). This in turn leads them to make a vital distinction between '*facts*' and '*assumptions*', and thus to develop a model of '*mutual manifestness*' which is less rigid, less truth-conditional and more 'graded' than previous models based on mutual knowledge:

Manifestness is...defined as a property not only of facts but more generally, of true or false assumptions. It is a relative property: facts and assumptions can be more or less strongly manifest. Because *manifest* is weaker than *known* or *assumed*, a notion of mutual manifestness can be developed that does not suffer from the same psychological implausibility as mutual knowledge (1987: 699).

As Leech and Thomas point out (1990: 202), Sperber & Wilson's presentation of manifestness as a 'relative property' which exhibits *degrees* of strength and weakness represents a major breakthrough for pragmatics. First and foremost, it allows for the possibility that certain significant effects can be 'brought about' through discourse *itself*, rather than discourse being something to which pre-existent 'thoughts' are 'brought along' for 'expression' and 'recognition'. From a doxological perspective, this in turn validates the traditional 'Catholic' interpretation of *lex orandi, lex credendi*. Secondly, it offers a plausible explanatory framework for pragmatic ambivalence. It provides a basis for the conclusions we drew from our own data at 5.6.2 - namely, that the discourse of church ceremonial often relies on studied ambiguities and figurative polysemy in order to evoke notions of mystery, ineffability and transcendence in the providence of God, and to sustain a ritual which can and must speak in 'many and various ways' to different worshippers with varied levels of understanding and commitment (Hebrews 1: 1). Hence, though Sperber & Wilson hint (1986: 41) that mutual manifestness will be especially strong in ritual<sup>4</sup>, thanks to the cultivation there of a mutual cognitive

---

4. The actual example quoted by Sperber & Wilson is the ritual of Freemasonry, the content of which differs markedly from that of mainstream Christian liturgy, but whose general communicative dynamics in terms of Relevance Theory are clearly comparable.

environment in which 'assumptions' extend to the identity and pragmatic competence of participants, their model still leaves room for a multiplicity of meanings and a range of interpretations *within* that environment. Because 'manifest is weaker than known or assumed' and because it covers *potential* as well as *actual* meanings, utterances in Sperber & Wilson's model do not have to be reduced to unitary or determinate denotations.

Having said this, although manifestness is a 'relative' phenomenon insofar as it concerns 'all' the assumptions an individual is 'capable of mentally representing and accepting as true' (1987: 699), Sperber and Wilson wisely recognise that effective communication relies in specific exchanges on a *selection* of such assumptions as are considered necessary for salient inferences to be made in that particular case. It is at this point that Relevance becomes crucial. At bottom, Sperber & Wilson propose that observation of this Maxim results from placing a *restriction* on the number of inferences drawn from an utterance - though there is no doubt that this number can still be more than one. The restriction in question is achieved according to a *Principle of Relevance* which they define as follows:

Every act of ostensive communication communicates the presumption of its own optimal relevance.

The 'presumption of optimal relevance' here is explained as resting on two conditions:

a) The set of assumptions  $\{I\}$  which the communicator intends to make manifest to the addressee is relevant enough to make it worth the addressee's while to process the ostensive stimulus.

b) The ostensive stimulus is the most relevant one the communicator could have used to communicate  $\{I\}$ .

(1986: 158)

Taking these two conditions together, Sperber & Wilson go on to argue that relevance, like manifestness, is a matter of 'degree' (1986: 123-32). More explicitly, it is analysable in terms of a '*cost/benefit trade-off*' between informativeness and 'processibility' (1986: 125; 1987: 703). We have already seen how Grice recognised that interlocutors might permit Quantity violations in exchange for a 'pay off' in terms of Manner, and have illustrated this with reference to liturgical circumlocution at examples (9) and (10), and the 'Charismatic "just"' at (12) - (14). What Sperber and Wilson suggest is much the same, but far from being an exception, they argue that this sort of *quid pro quo* is a fundamental feature of all communication. Specifically, they contend that it can be expressed as an interaction of two *Extent Conditions*:

1. An assumption is relevant in a context to the extent that its contextual effects are large.
2. An assumption is relevant in a context to the extent that the effort required to process it in that context is small.

(1986: 125)

What Sperber and Wilson mean by 'contextual effects' here is best grasped by an initial reference to their comparison of 'old' and 'new' information:

some information is old: it is already present in the individual's representation of the world. Unless it is needed for the performance of a particular cognitive task, and is easier to access from the environment than from memory, such information is not worth processing at all. Other information is not only new but entirely unconnected with anything in the individual's representation of the world. It can only be added to this representation as isolated bits and pieces, and this usually means too much processing cost for too little benefit. Still other information is new but connected with old information. When these interconnected new and old items of information are used together as premises in an inference process, further new information can be derived: information which could not have been inferred without this combination of old and new premises. When the processing of new information gives rise to such a multiplication effect we call it *relevant*. The greater the multiplication effect, the greater the relevance. (1986: 48).

Again here, there is a confirmation of what is 'brought about' in discourse, as well as of what is 'brought along' to it. Specifically, the 'interconnection' of old and new information to which Sperber and Wilson refer here is said by them to generate 'contextual effect' in three main ways:

- a) By the introduction of new assumptions ('contextual implications')
- b) By the strengthening of old assumptions
- c) By the elimination of old assumptions in favour of new assumptions which contradict them

(cf. Leech & Thomas 1990: 203)

Of these three categories, it is the *second* type of contextual effect (b) which carries by far the greatest significance for liturgy. Even at its most apparently

'spontaneous', the discourse of church worship is still characteristically reliant on antecedent 'assumptions' from Scripture, tradition and surrounding culture. What Sperber and Wilson offer is a means of accounting for how, and to what extent, these assumptions can be reaffirmed even while surface features of lexis, grammar and phonology are varied. In view of the English Reformed tradition's rejection of set texts in favour of 'semi-free' discourses bound ideationally by God's Word from the Bible and doctrine, but set loose from prescribed vocabulary and syntax, this seems helpful.

It should be apparent by now that the diversity of worship through the 10 churches in our field survey is quite considerable. Nevertheless, it is also clear that despite marked differences of structure, style and churchmanship, certain key assumptions are 'strengthened' almost across the board. Most obviously, a recognition and exposition of the meaning of 'Advent' is shared by nine of the 10 services analysed; only in the Warsash transcript is there no recognition whatsoever that worship is taking place on Advent Sunday, and it is no coincidence that this reflects the most radically informal and 'extemporary' service in our sample. Historically, liturgical commemoration of Advent was one of the babies thrown out with the bathwater of Roman 'ritualism' (Davies 1948: 75-6; Nichols 1968: 100), and it may be that the Warsash approach represents a trace of this. By contrast, observance of the Advent season, and of the Christian year as a whole, has been substantially revived in English Reformed churches during the last century, as part of a more general move to restore links with the more positive aspects of Patristic

and early church practice, and it is this which our corpus more generally reflects (Micklem 1936: 173; Barkley 1966: 35). We have already witnessed the Minister of Wheatley's appeal to 'traditional' assumptions about Advent in his lengthy service introduction (24); similar reinforcements of established assumptions are evident in the following examples:

(25) MINISTER:      Today,  
                               is,  
                               Advent..Sunday.  
                               The day when,  
                               We OFFICIALLY,  
                               OFFICIALLY,  
                               Start to look forward..to Christmas.

(AS 1.105-11)

(26) MINISTER:      Today is the first Sunday in Advent  
                               it's the church's new year's day

(AS 2.144-5)

(27) MINISTER:      A SPECIAL..day today,  
                               Advent Sunday,  
                               the first..Sunday in Advent,  
                               when we're  
                               preparing,  
                               for the coming of Jesus Christ.

(AS 8.5-10).

In each of these cases, the Minister 'makes manifest' certain assumptions from the wider 'cognitive environment' of ecclesiastical convention and institution, and these assumptions are thereby 'strengthened' in the *local* cognitive environment of their particular church service. A similar process attends the lighting of Advent candles, which also appears in nine of our 10 transcripts:



(28) MINISTER: There's been a tradition for,  
very many centuries in some parts of the Christian church of  
lighting a candle on an Advent ring,  
on each Sunday in Advent.  
And you know that in recent years we have  
adopted..that custom here,..in England and  
here in Emmanuel.

(AS 2.169-75)

(29) MINISTER: Today,  
is the..first..Sunday in Advent.  
And like at every Advent we're going to light the candle,  
every Sunday.  
till then (we're going to have a central one on Christmas Day itself),  
to move us closer and closer to that day,  
when we'll celebrate the coming of our Lord.

(AS 10.36-42)

(30) MINISTER: I said at the beginning it's Advent where we celebrate,  
the process leading up to the coming of Jesus the light of the world.  
You see in front we have...a candle at Christmas.  
Stuck in a candle holder,  
and at this year we- we light candles to remind us,  
of the countdown to the coming of this light.

(AS 10.48-53)

If the assumptions of 'Advent' are most specifically strengthened at one time of the year, then other assumptions are bolstered more regularly in Reformed worship. One of these is the assumption that we are sinners who must confess our transgressions to God. Although set 'prayers of confession' do not occur in every transcript, and are perhaps significantly absent from the more evangelical services held at Derriford (AS 4), Warsash (5), Bulwell (8) and High Heaton (10), even those who do not include them as a dedicated item still implicitly strengthen this assumption by means such as praising Jesus for identifying with 'our human lives in their frailty and sin' (AS 4.41-2) or by petitioning God to 'help us put aside those

things that we build up for our own sakes' (AS 8.282-3). Furthermore, Sperber & Wilson point out that the relative 'strength' or 'weakness' with which assumptions are 'made manifest' depends on much more than the words used to express them, is borne out by the fact that in our corpus, very similar assumptions about sin are conveyed at comparable levels of manifestness, despite quite contrasting *styles* of discourse:

- (31) MINISTER: Almighty God,  
 in Jesus you have called us to walk as children of the light,  
 but we have preferred our own way..the way of darkness,  
 we have not been willing,  
 to let the light of Christ into every...part of our lives.  
 we have not been willing  
 to respond with wholehearted obedience and total dedication.  
 Lord,  
 have mercy upon us.

(AS 6.30-40 (From Dixon 1983: 12-13)

- (32) [Jesus] also said that he had come to call the ordinary,  
 that is the: difficult,  
 the awkward..people.  
 People who make mistakes,  
 and make a mess of their lives,  
 people like you and me. [...]  
 Gracious God,  
 you see us and know us,  
totally.  
 You know how...mixed up we are, [...]  
 Lord,  
 we need your forgiveness.

(AS 7.463-96)

In their respective settings, the 'contextual effects' of these prayers seem ultimately to be very similar: despite their stylistic differences -the first relatively formal, the second relatively colloquial - they appear comparably to 'count as'

liturgical confessions. Having said this, it would be quite wrong to suppose that Sperber & Wilson do not take account of stylistic considerations in formulating their theory. Far from it: they warn against any *necessary* or *absolute* distinction between the 'form' and 'function' of communication, as if what we 'mean' can be entirely separated from the way we express ourselves. Indeed, Sperber and Wilson contend that *style* is properly defined not in terms of the morphological, syntactic or prosodic construction of linguistic 'figures', but as something which 'arises...in the pursuit of relevance' - that is, in regard to the aforementioned 'cost/benefit' equation of contextual effectiveness and cognitive processibility. (1987: 706). Their own exemplification of this is that we characteristically take the trouble to read a difficult poem because we reasonably expect that it will reward us with a level of aesthetic, intellectual and spiritual satisfaction commensurate with the work we put in to understanding it (1986: 236-7). In the two church service examples just cited, (31) could be said to require somewhat more 'cognitive processing effort' in that its style is more 'marked' and archaic in comparison with (32), which is relatively more 'accessible', 'familiar' and 'everyday'. Having said this, (31) could be represented as a more *typical* prayer of confession *vis à vis* the *institutional context* of Christian worship, where, as we have seen, it may be permissible to flout certain conversational Maxims precisely in order to *distinguish* both God and His church from the language-games of 'secular' life. As Crystal has confirmed (1965: 151), 'it is still necessary for a religion to have a special, "marked" style to highlight its specialized purpose. This is a formally abnormal kind of language which one does

not normally use or expect, and in its unfamiliarity lies its value, for it attracts attention to the exceptional purpose of its function'.

Now Sperber & Wilson stress that the dual 'extent conditions' on Relevance of 'informativeness' and 'processibility' are not *absolute*, but *vary relative to 'context'*. The problem with *liturgical* discourse is that *its* 'context' is both 'sacred' and 'profane'. Although the church needs a distinctive language for its Christian members, this language cannot become *so* distinctive that it encourages esotericism or Gnosticism, or confuses those who are not yet 'inducted' into the rite. These, as we have been pointing out, were precisely the grounds on which Calvin attacked the Latin Mass and on which the Puritans rejected 'set forms'. On the other hand, if it becomes too 'vernacular', it may risk descent into banality and even 'gimmickry'. Thus, while the Wheatley confession (31) may be harder to 'process', it might be said to yield greater 'effect' in relation to the established context of church worship; reciprocally, though the Weoley Castle confession (32) seems more immediately 'processible', it appears to yield less 'effect' with regard to the *liturgical* context, even while connecting more dynamically with the mainstream of 'social discourse'. Granted, one could argue from another point of view that by introducing a more contemporary, conversational style, the Minister in (32) is actually highlighting or 'foregrounding' a contextually alien mode of discourse by transposing it from its normal habitat into a 'foreign' context. In this scenario, the worshipper has to make *more* rather than *less* effort to infer the Relevance of the colloquialisms, because they do not 'fit' his expectations of what a 'prayer of confession' should be. Further

still, it might also be thought significant that Wheatley URC is an old chapel in a rural Oxfordshire village whereas Weoley Castle Community Church (URC) is a modern, brick-built centre in the middle of a large outlying council estate. In each case, 'context of situation' and 'context of culture' could be said to have determined the relative 'processibility' and 'markedness' of the styles used. Put simply: elevated and archaic language may be more 'relevant' in a more conservative or traditional setting, and colloquial language more relevant in a more 'contemporary' or modernistic setting. Indeed, it is quite probably because of this, rather than because of their sheer 'content' alone, that the two prayers in question seem, in the end, to generate a roughly equivalent level of 'contextual effects'.

What is clear from all this is that Sperber & Wilson would appear justified in presenting 'style' as something which can *affect* meaning, rather than as something which merely *transmits* meaning as defined in advance of linguistic instantiation. As Warner points out, this has profound implications for the study of liturgical language in general and liturgical revision in particular. Noting that most liturgists have seen 'meaning' and style as separate issues in liturgical study and composition, Warner contends that 'if style affects implicature, then stylistic changes in the language of worship may have far-reaching consequences for the faith of the worshipping community' (1990: 163). Not only this: he makes it clear that while potentially momentous, these consequences are unlikely to be as theologically damaging as those which would spring from maintaining the old conception of meaning as 'something construable in terms of a set of coordinates independent of

style [and thus] truly explicable in terms of truth conditions and their analogues, after the programmes of formal semantics'. Certainly, we ourselves have already confirmed (2.4.1 ff.) Warner's contention that these terms are not only 'implausible' with respect to linguistic theory but 'devastating' for theology.

In order more closely to trace the 'consequences' at which Warner hints - that is, the consequences of adopting a relevance-theoretical approach to liturgical discourse in contrast to a traditional semantic approach - it is important to reiterate that Sperber & Wilson's strategy allows us to posit *degrees* of implication and inference rather than *unitary* or *absolute* correspondences between words and 'the world'. As a result, it becomes feasible to speak of implicatures exhibiting diverse levels of 'strength' and 'weakness' (1986: 197-202) in relation to Grice's condition of Indeterminacy:

The fiction that there is a clear-cut distinction between wholly determinate, specifically intended inferences and indeterminate, wholly unintended inferences cannot be maintained. Relevance Theory offers a way of getting rid of this fiction without sacrificing clarity of conceptual framework...

An utterance with a fully determinate implicated premise or conclusion forces the hearer to supply just this premise or conclusion and attribute it to the speaker as part of her beliefs. An utterance with a small range of strongly implicated premises or conclusions strongly encourages the hearer to use some subset of these premises or conclusions, and to regard some subset of them - not necessarily the same subset - as part of the speaker's beliefs. An utterance with a wide range of weakly implicated premises or conclusions again encourages the hearer to use some subset of these assumptions, and to regard some subset of them - again not necessarily the same - as part of the speaker's beliefs. Clearly, the weaker the implicatures, the less confidence the hearer can have that the particular premises or conclusions he supplies will reflect the speaker's thoughts, and this is where the indeterminacy lies. However, people may entertain different beliefs on the basis of the same cognitive environment. The aim of communication in general is to increase the mutuality of cognitive environments rather than guarantee an impossible duplication of thoughts. (1986: 199-200).

An obvious consequence deriving from this proposed 'cline' of weak-to-strong implicatures is that it promises to dissolve Grice's (already fuzzy) distinction between 'conventional' and 'conversational' implicatures: if determinacy and indeterminacy are matters of degree rather than clear-cut division, and if Grice was thus wrong to make them key indicators of 'conventionality' vs. 'nonconventionality', we can avoid the temptation of polarising liturgical discourse in simplistic terms as either 'formulaic' or 'extemporary'. In addition, tropes like metaphor, symbol, hyperbole and metonymy - which have long been the central 'stylistic' foci of many 'traditional' liturgical language studies (Brook 1965; Ramshaw 1986; Wren 1989) - can be treated not as 'discontinuous' from literal discourse, but rather as 'resulting from the same standard process of comprehension' - that is, from the same 'presumption of optimal relevance' (1987: 708). Again, the difference is not one of kind, but of degree: figurative devices typically achieve relevance through conveying a range of weak implicatures rather than a small number of 'stronger' implicatures or (as in literal discourse), a single implicature. This means that they are 'less direct' and so require extra processing effort (1986: 235). According to the Principle of Relevance, they should compensate for this by offering as 'pay-off' a greater set of contextual effects (1986: 236-7). Furthermore, because Sperber and Wilson's analysis is based so thoroughly on the relative strengths of implicatures rather than on sheer reference, figurative devices are accorded no 'special' status but are instead said to resemble other rhetorical strategies like repetition, zeugma and semantic parallelism (1986: 217-224). Hence

repetition, which is so crucial in Ladrière's conception of liturgical language performativity (1973: 60), can be seen as far more than a mere duplication of either structure or meaning. Rather, like metaphor, it is to be interpreted as widening the range of weak implicatures available to an addressee, thereby offering a worthwhile inferential pay-off. So, according to Relevance Theory, the difference between 'My childhood days are gone' and 'My childhood days are gone, gone' is that the repeated 'gone' invites the hearer to assume that in addition to all the implicatures which could be derived from the first 'gone', 'there is a whole range of still further premises and conclusions which the speaker wants to implicate' - an assumption which would in turn demand an 'expansion of context' to include such possibilities as the speaker encouraging the hearer to compare one another's childhoods, or to convey a particular feeling of reminiscence and regret (1987: 706-7).

With these explanations, Sperber & Wilson claim to reinterpret what have often been represented as 'emotive' or 'affective' strategies in discourse in such a way that they are seen to display a 'wide array of mutual cognitive effects' (1987: 707). However, by representing these effects as 'poetic' (1986: 222), they might be seen to have precluded an analysis of *liturgical* tropes and schemes along the same lines. Such a reservation stems from two closely connected factors. Firstly, the 'literary' devices employed in ritual language tend, almost by definition, to be 'frozen' - that is, stereotyped and routinized; secondly, they can often be traced neither to a specific 'addressor' nor to a perceptible cognitive 'intention'. Indeed, it is for reasons akin to these that Gail Ramshaw prefers to designate liturgy as



'metaphoric rhetoric' rather than 'poetic discourse' (1986: 3). This definition appears to make good sense when set in relation to ancient institutionalised forms like the *Kyries*, *Gloria* and *Agnus Dei*, each of which displays the kind of repetition, rhythm, imagery and symbolism which is exploited by poets, but whose purpose is much less geared towards the revelation of 'self-reflective consciousness' than most poems, and whose function is much more to instantiate the corporate ecclesial language-game than to point up the aesthetic potentialities of language itself (cf. Ramshaw 1983: 3):

- (33) MINISTER: Lord,  
have mercy upon us  
ALL: Christ have mercy upon us,  
Lord have mercy upon us.

(AS 6.38-40 cf. URC 1989: 7)

- (34) Glory to God in the highest,  
and peace to his people on earth.  
Lord God, heavenly King,  
almighty God and Father,  
we worship you, we give you thanks,  
we praise you for your glory.

(URC 1989: 8)

- (35) Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world,  
have mercy on us.  
Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world,  
have mercy on us.  
Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world,  
Grant us peace.

(URC 1989: 18)

We shall return to the fixed repetitions of formulae like these in Chapter 8, but at this stage it is worth noting that for Sperber & Wilson (1986:2), 'what is communicated by a religious ritual is quite different from what is communicated by a list of stock-exchange rates' (1986: 2). Having made this point however, they subsequently and disappointingly bypass such formulaic and 'institutionalised' discourses and instead focus almost entirely on situations in which a single 'message-originator' and a single 'receiver' are physically co-present and so communicating by explicit ostension, as well as by inference. In this sense, their exemplification fails to reflect the comprehensiveness of their theory. While this makes the immediate application of Relevance to liturgy more difficult, Sperber & Wilson do at least offer occasional hints as to how their ideas might be adapted in this direction. First, they are well aware of the 'standardised' nature of many linguistic strategies - eg. of the fact that metaphors are not always 'cognitively created' by the addressors who use them (1986: 236). Indeed, as we have seen, their whole point about 'metaphoric creativity' is that it varies along a *scale*, being more apparent where the range of potential weak implicatures is large. Despite the fact that Relevance Theory allows for ambivalence even where the level of mutual manifestness is high, it is likely that ritualized figures will still yield fewer such weak implicatures than a freshly-written poem and will therefore be less 'creative'. This is precisely because, in spite of its often deliberate ambiguities, liturgical discourse is inferentially *limited* by external factors like doctrine, canon law and the history of interpretation - factors which can in their turn be said to contribute to

the 'mutual cognitive environment' of church worship. Thus, while liturgical utterances may display a *plurality* of implicatures, they cannot in any realistic sense display an *infinity* of implicatures: isolated individuals may decide to make liturgy mean what they want it to mean, but their conclusions are unlikely to be 'relevant' to the communicative dynamic of liturgy itself, which must be expounded first and foremost as a corporate, socially-constituted dynamic and not as an individual or 'one-to-one' interaction.

Understandably, Warner casts such institutional limitations on liturgical Relevance as confirming the 'Protestant' conception of *lex orandi, lex credendi*: 'if "relevance" is to be invoked in this context norms are needed by which it is to be established, and these must be primarily theological' (1990: 169). Likewise, in a comment pertinent to our earlier analysis of confessions, Warner reflects:

In religion, we are told, the way, the truth and the life are different aspects of the one unity; if this is so, then one's life of prayer and worship is likely to be internally related to one's belief structure. *Lex orandi; lex credendi*; confessing oneself before God as a 'miserable sinner' (even in the Tudor sense of the word) in whom there is 'no health' has implicatures which render more credible than do weakened formulations that claim 'Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look upon iniquity'. Reciprocally, the move to weaken the corporate expressions of penitence may not be wholly unrelated to the decline in the belief in the reality of hell (1990: 163).

Relevance theory, then, offers a model with which it is possible genuinely to account for the 'bi-lateralism' of doctrine and worship - a framework in which 'faith' can be seen as both brought along *to* liturgical discourse by 'tradition' and 'orthodoxy', and brought about *by* it as individuals are existentially and

orthopraxistically inducted into the ecclesial discourse-community (cf. Ladrière 1973: 56-8). Although Sperber & Wilson show little inclination towards the sort of 'sociological' and 'institutional' models of meaning which we have been using, it must be stressed that their avowed intentionalism (1986: 64), while most usually personalised, is not such as to deny the frequently 'second-hand' or '*echoic*' nature of human discourse (1986: 237-243). Indeed, at one point they go so far as to admit that 'an echoic utterance need not interpret a precisely attributable thought' and that as such 'it may echo the thought of a *certain kind of person or of people in general*' (1986: 238, my emphasis). They continue,

Suppose you tell me to hurry up and I reply as follows:

More haste, less speed.

This utterance is a literal interpretation of a traditional piece of wisdom which achieves relevance by making manifest that I find this piece of wisdom indeed wise in the circumstances. Clearly, however, what makes traditional wisdom traditional is that it is attributable not to any specific source but to people in general (1986: 238-39)

As we have been stressing, the 'specific sources' of liturgical discourse are often extremely difficult to trace, and in the final analysis, are rarely attributable to individuals alone. Sperber & Wilson's interpretation here is therefore especially significant for us - although it might be argued that the freedom to *select* and *apply* 'unattributed' formulae in specific circumstances is still far more restricted in liturgy as a whole than in the sort of casual talk from which their example is drawn. Indeed, although the prerogative of 'selectional variation' constituted a fundamental

principle of English Reformed Dissent, it is legitimate to question the degree to which even extemporary worship can be said to resemble those 'conversations' and one-to-one dialogues with which Sperber & Wilson are so overwhelmingly concerned. It is to this very matter that we shall now turn.

